

Portrait of a Film

SHOW GIRLS

Text by

PAUL VERHOEVEN

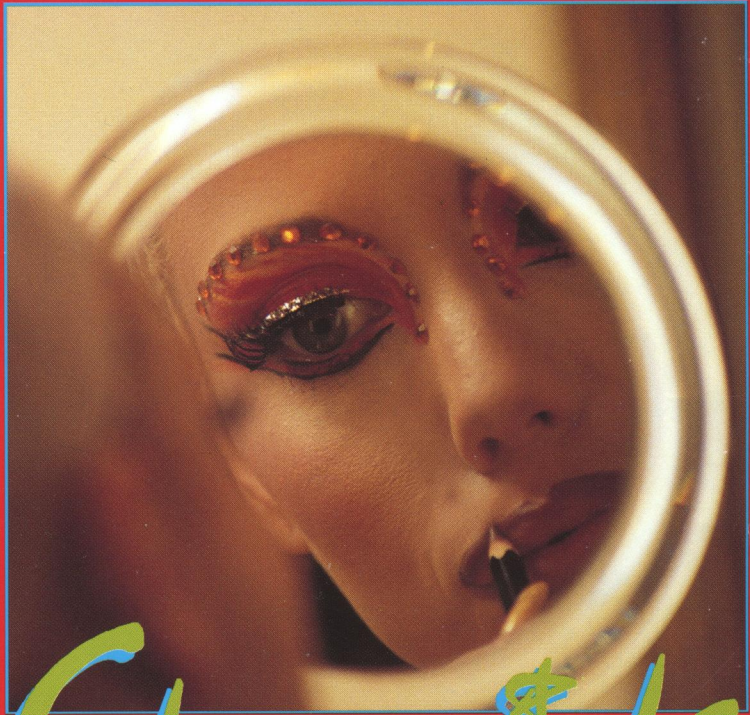
Photographs by

DOUGLAS KIRKLAND

BETTINA RHEIMS

MARY ELLEN MARK

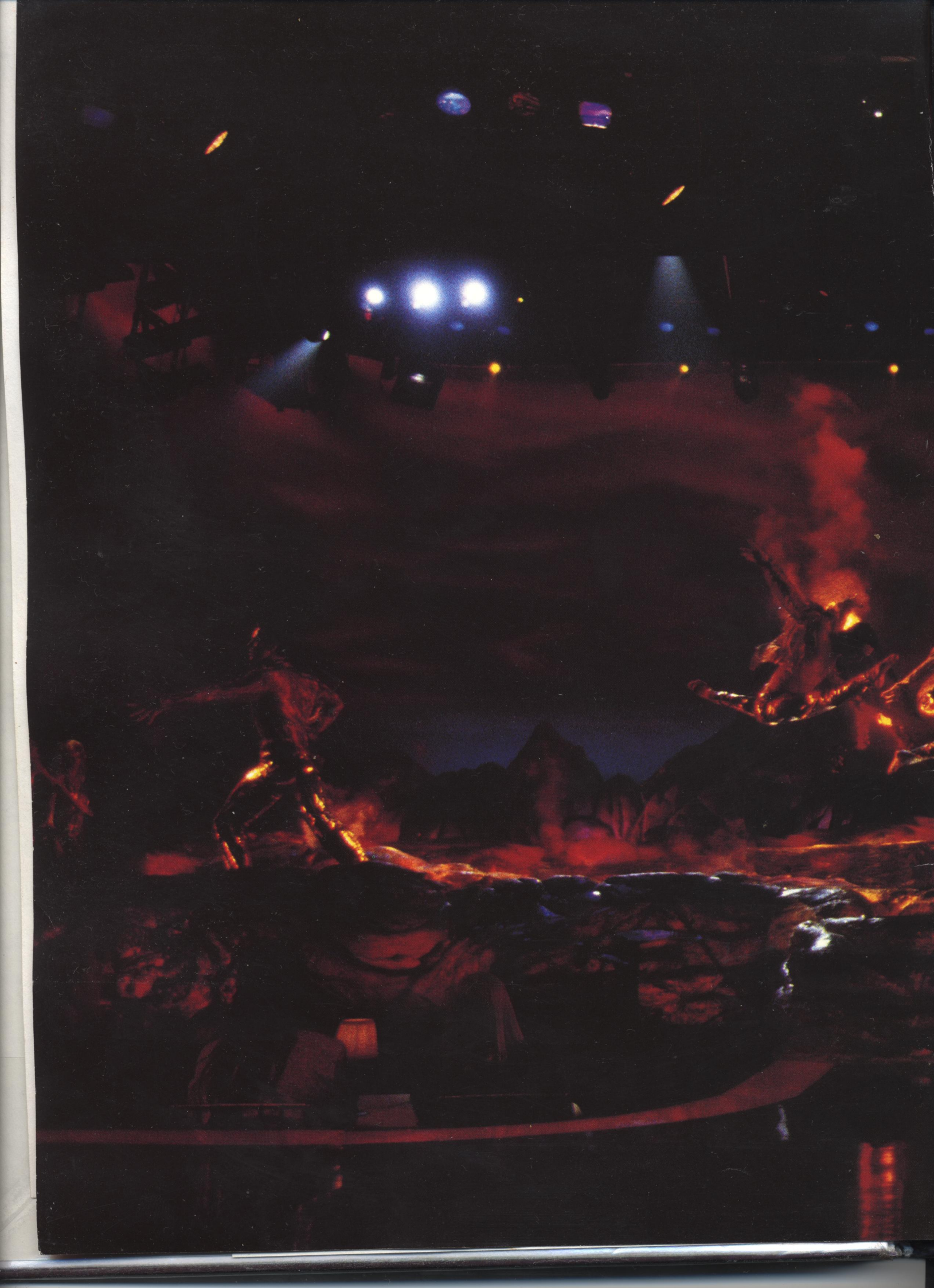
MURRAY CLOSE

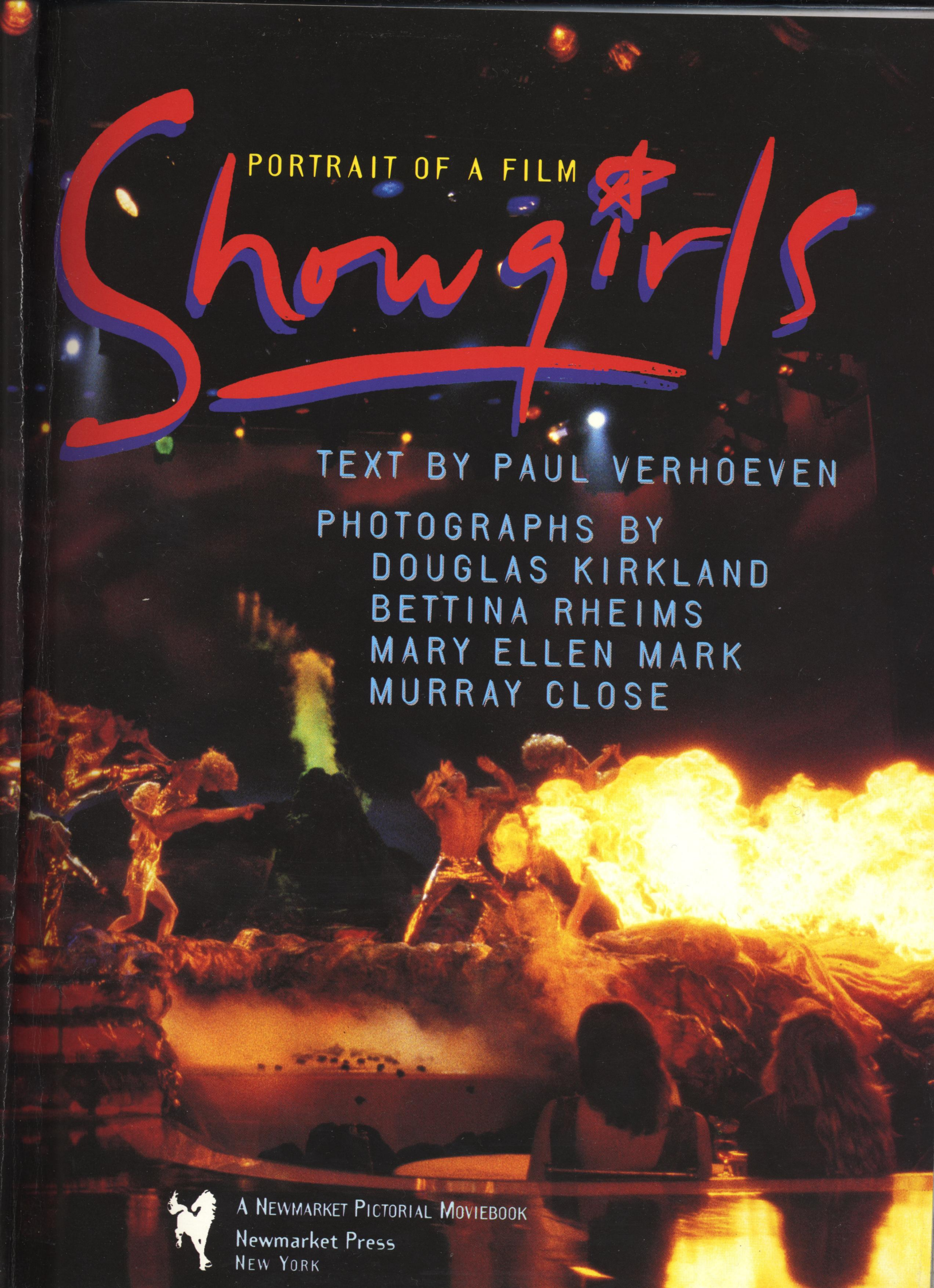


Showgirls

54001033







PORTRAIT OF A FILM

Showgirls

TEXT BY PAUL VERHOEVEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DOUGLAS KIRKLAND
BETTINA RHEIMS
MARY ELLEN MARK
MURRAY CLOSE



A NEWMARKET PICTORIAL MOVIEBOOK
Newmarket Press
NEW YORK

To Martine Verhoeven and Alan Marshall—who kept me going.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The author wishes to thank Joe Eszterhas whose words inspired those images.

He would also like to give special thanks to Andy Fogelson, Steve Newman, Stacy Lumbrezer, James Ferrera, Tom Hansen, Marion Rosenberg, Lynn Waddell, Francoise Kirkland, Eliane Laffont, and Carol Le Fluffy. Also to Mario Kassir at Carolco and Jerome Seydoux and Paul Rassam of Chargeurs.

Particular thanks to Esther Margolis, Joe Gannon and everyone at Newmarket Press along with Digby Diehl and Deborah Daly. Finally, thanks to Danielle Straughn and Michael DiLeonardo at Studio Photo Service.

The publisher and editors wish to thank the following for their special contributions to this book: Richard Rouillard; Leroy Radcliffe; Paul Murphy; Jacques Christofilis; Kevin Corcoran; Martie Shieh and Florence Tsang of Super Color Lab in Los Angeles, also at MGM/UA, Susan Toumaian, Carol Bua, Jacqueline Eddy, Deborah Waldron, Elliot Chang, Frank Lomanto, Gerry Rich; Joe Eszterhas for his cooperation in permitting us to publish excerpts of his screenplay; and at Vegas Productions, James Ferrera, Stacy Lumbrezer, Robin Glenn, and especially Steve Newman, Alan Marshall, and Paul Verhoeven.

Design and compilation copyright © 1995 by Newmarket Press. All rights reserved.
Text and storyboard drawings copyright © 1995 by Paul Verhoeven. All rights reserved.
Screenplay excerpts copyright © 1995 by Chargetex 6, S.A. (U.S.). All rights reserved.
"Showgirls" copyright © 1995 by Chargetex 6, S.A. (U.S.). All rights reserved. Licensed by MGM/UA Licensing & Merchandising.
Photographs on pages 92 and 93 copyright by the photographers credited.
Cover art and all other photographs copyright © 1995 by United Artists Pictures, Inc. All rights reserved.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Douglas Kirkland: 1, 5, 20, 24-39, 93 (left), 94
Bettina Rheims: 40-49
Mary Ellen Mark: 9, 15, 16, 19, 50-63, 86, 92 (left)
Murray Close: 2-3, 6, 10-11, 23, 64-85, 93 (right), 95, 96
Stéphane Coutrelle: 92 (right)

This book published simultaneously in the United States of America and in Canada.

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form, without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to: Permissions Department, Newmarket Press, 18 E. 48th Street, New York, NY 10017.

95 96 97 98 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Verhoeven, Paul. 1938-

Showgirls: portrait of a film/text by Paul Verhoeven : photographs by Kirkland, Douglas; Rheims, Bettina; Mark, Mary Ellen; Close, Murray.
p. cm. — (A Newmarket pictorial moviebook)
ISBN 1-55704-253-5 (hc). — ISBN 1-55704-267-5 (pb)
1. Showgirls (Motion picture) 2. Showgirls (Photography) I. Verhoeven, Kirkland, Rheims, Mark, Close.
II. Title. III. Series.
PN1997.S4783V47 1995
791.43' 72—dc20

95-24796
CIP

Produced by Newmarket Productions, a division of Newmarket Publishing & Communications Corporation: Esther Margolis, director; Joe Gannon, production manager; Erika Goldman, editor; Ruth Mannes, assistant editor.

Project editor and designer: Deborah Daly,
Daly Design, Marina del Rey, CA
Text editor: Digby Diehl

Other Newmarket Pictorial Moviebooks include:

Panther: A Pictorial History of the Black Panthers and the Story Behind the Film
Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: The Classic Tale of Terror Reborn on Film
The Age of Innocence: A Portrait of the Film based on the Novel by Edith Wharton
Bram Stoker's Dracula: The Film and the Legend
Dances with Wolves: The Illustrated Story of the Epic Film
Far and Away: The Illustrated Story of a Journey from Ireland to America in the 1890's
Gandhi: A Pictorial Biography
The Inner Circle: An Inside View of Soviet Life Under Stalin
Last Action Hero: The Official Moviebook
Neil Simon's Lost in Yonkers: The Illustrated Screenplay of the Film
Rapa Nui: The Easter Island Legend on Film
Wyatt Earp: The Film and the Filmmakers
Wyatt Earp's West: Images and Words

QUANTITY PURCHASES

Companies, professional groups, clubs, and other organizations may qualify for special terms when ordering quantities of this title. For information, write: Special Sales Department, Newmarket Press, 18 E. 48th Street, New York, NY 10017. Phone: (212) 832-3575; Fax: (212) 832-3629.

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
First Edition



CONTENTS

Paul Verhoeven: *Sex, Cinema & Showgirls* 7

Douglas Kirkland: *Goddesses* 24

Bettina Rheims: *Chemistry* 40

Mary Ellen Mark: *Strippers* 50

Murray Close: *Avenging Angels* 64

Shooting the Script 87

BIOGRAPHIES 92

CREDITS 95



Paul Verhoeven with Elizabeth Berkley

7023 1475

SEX, CINEMA & SHOWGIRLS



Is it all just tits and ass? Looking at the photographs in this book and seeing my film *Showgirls*, some people might say so. Even if this perception were true, that's fine with me: Why shouldn't we enjoy the beauty of the human body? Like it or not, we are biologically destined to enjoy sexual attraction as the means by which we continue the species. However, the experience of making *Showgirls*, and the aesthetic, emotional, and thematic elements expressed in these photographs, mean considerably more to me.

The four diverse approaches to photography presented in this book are the result of my desire to find visual artists whose talents might best reflect the themes and values of *Showgirls* and to present a published record of my film that offers a creative vision of its own. I selected each photographer for their particular strengths and interests.

Douglas Kirkland expresses almost classical understanding of the endless possibilities of the nude human body. Throughout his career, he has returned over and over to this subject with beautiful men and women. I am impressed by his work in general, and I remembered some sessions he shot with Marilyn Monroe that made me think of him for this *Showgirls* project.

Bettina Rheims has been one of my favorite photographers for several years. She shot the poster image for *Basic Instinct* and some particularly evocative pictures of Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone. Her sense of stylized eroticism is unique and exciting.

Mary Ellen Mark is, of course, regarded as one of the finest photographers in the world. Her unmistakable gritty documentary style appeals to me and seems right for *Showgirls*. Happily, she had worked previously with my producer, Alan Marshall, on *Fame*, and he helped me to persuade her to work on this project. I

particularly like the fact that she works frequently in black-and-white, and her photographs of the cast are remarkable portraits.

Murray Close is widely regarded as one of the best still photographers working in the motion picture business. He captures images from our work on the set that closely parallel what you see on the screen—both in detail and spirit.

As a young Dutchman, I was entranced by American musical films, and the opportunity to direct one has been the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. Because the project emerged so quickly, and because the actors are primarily young people who have not yet become Hollywood mega-stars, parts of my work on this production reminded me of the exhilarating, hurried time when I began to make movies in Holland in the seventies. Also, because this movie takes place in the unique American atmosphere of Las Vegas, it gave me the opportunity to deal with the American obsessions with sex, violence, power, and success—themes that clearly pervade all my European work.

The genesis of *Showgirls* was a lunch at The Ivy, a Beverly Hills restaurant, with Joe Eszterhas, to see if there was anything left of our friendship after the explosive disagreement we had over the script for *Basic Instinct*. (For those who mercifully have forgotten, some gay and lesbian groups protested the way in which homosexual characters were portrayed in Joe's script. He agreed to make changes; I refused.) Our mutual friend Ben Myron was along as a peacekeeper. Joe was gracious enough to admit that I had been correct to ignore the pressure groups and to make the film the way he wrote it. We had a few drinks, a few laughs, rediscovered our friendship, and began to discuss the possibility of doing another project together. During an hour or so, the three of us talked about dozens of movie ideas. Ben had the original concept, but Joe was the one who proposed, "What about a musical about Las Vegas?"

I was hooked immediately. Joe claims that my eyes began to glisten. I was remembering all those big MGM musicals that I had watched over and over as a kid. I loved what Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins had done with *West Side Story*. I really like ballet and when I was about fifteen or sixteen, I thought about becoming a dancer. Nothing ever came of it, except I filled sketchbooks with drawings of ballets and ideas for choreography. I always wanted to make a movie with a lot of music and dancing, and I liked the idea that this was not going to be a "highbrow" musical.

Right from the beginning, Joe and I saw this as a story about Las Vegas showgirls. For most of my career, I have been interested in subcultures that are not at the top of the ladder. One of my favorite creations is *Spetters*, a movie about a group of blue-collar kids with no education, no money, no power—nothing but dreams about motorcycle racing. As it turns out, *Showgirls* has a lot in common with that earlier movie of mine. It isn't just people at the top who are filled with ambitions. Both Nomi and those blue-collar kids in *Spetters* reach for goals in

the same way. Although Nomi comes from a similar hardscrabble background, she discovers that there are some things she just won't do.

Shortly thereafter, Joe and Ben (who became co-producer) and I went to Las Vegas for some preliminary research. Of course, in the new "family-oriented" Vegas, there are still a few shows that feature the real, old-fashioned showgirls with their feathered costumes such as Bally's "Jubilee." A couple of others, however, such as "Splash" and "Into the Night," feature topless nudity and sexy dancing, and this was much closer to what we had in mind. We talked to showgirls, dancers, choreographers, casino bosses, bouncers, entertainment directors, public relations people, and anyone else who would give us insights, but we didn't find the story we were looking for.

Then, we explored the world of the strip clubs, such as the Cheetah, the Crazy Horse, and the Palomino. We found more interesting stories there. The women in these clubs certainly are not showgirls or even dancers, for the most part. But we liked the raucous, sleazy atmosphere, and we were surprised at how much raw sexuality there was in the private rooms where "lap dancing"—in which a naked woman basically bumps and grinds over and on top of a seated male customer—is the preferred entertainment.

Most of the strippers don't really dance. They just move sensuously to the music. But we saw several women who really were dancers. This formed the seed for the character of Nomi in the film. In other interviews we heard of some strippers' aspirations to jump over into one of the big Vegas shows. And some of them did.







Some of the women we talked with had very strong personalities—real “fuck you” attitudes. They were difficult to deal with and had sharp tongues, but out of their collective voices we heard a character developing. Realizing that some dancers used sexual relationships to get the top spots in the big Vegas shows, Joe then quickly made the leap to a story about a young unknown who will do anything to steal a job as a lead dancer in a show. We later realized that there were elements from Joe Mankiewicz’s brilliant 1950 film, *All About Eve*, in our story. You may remember how Anne Baxter undermines Bette Davis in that movie.

Out of all of this emerged a film about a young woman with a disturbed background that is not revealed until the end of the picture. Her name is Nomi, and she goes to Las Vegas with the dream of becoming a dancer in one of the big shows. She has to begin in one of the strip clubs, in which she claws and manipulates her way up the ladder of success. She uses her strange and complex relationship with Cristal, the lead dancer in the biggest show, to get what she wants. And she discovers that at each rung of the ladder, she has to pay a higher and higher price for what she is getting. Ultimately, she refuses to pay with her soul. Joe Eszterhas calls it the dark side of the American Dream.

At first, I thought of *West Side Story* and *Flashdance* as the musical inspirations for this movie. The choreography in *West Side Story* was innovative in 1961 and it still holds up. *Flashdance* is a story about a strong-willed girl who wants to dance, and, of course, that was one of the first projects for which Joe Eszterhas received writing credit. More important, it was the first theatrical film to use music video techniques in both dramatic and dance sequences.

The more I thought about it, however, the more I realized that *Showgirls* would have to be more extravagant, more excessive in the big productions. After all, this is a Las Vegas show. It takes place in a town where everyday sights are a giant pyramid, an erupting volcano, white tigers, and acres of neon so bright it looks like daytime at midnight. People are winning and losing millions of dollars on the turn of a card. It is literally a completely extravagant town. The Hollywood version of a Las Vegas production number has to dazzle moviegoers who have seen the real thing.

For cinematic style, I wanted a very free, fluid look, something that would work with all of the movement and spectacle of the story. I ended up studying Federico Fellini’s *8½* and Orson Welles’ *Touch of Evil* for inspiration. Fellini moves so fluidly through that movie and does so much with the camera that I learn something new every time I see it. *Touch of Evil* is a *film noir* that is very much choreographed for the camera. When the camera makes the moves, the actors are all choreographed in a way that the camera can go from here to there, passing through the different angles that the director had in mind—all done so beautifully you don’t notice unless you are really looking for it. Although they didn’t have the technology—in fact, I can’t figure out how they did some of the camera moves—the technique is very much what we do with Steadicam today.

Probably 70 percent of *Showgirls* was shot with Steadicam. Larry McConkey was my first camera operator and Steadicam operator. He and Jost Vacano, my director of photography—who had used a similar technique in *Soldier of Orange* and especially in *Das Boot*—helped me get that loose feeling I wanted. On the screen, it appears as though the camera is following the actors, as it might do in a *cinéma vérité* documentary. In fact, the actors are moved or choreographed by me, so that the camera can move when and where I want it to go. The actors handled some complex moves and some detailed choreography, and Larry gave them a lot of freedom to work within those moves. Basically, you never see the camera moving without being motivated by an actor, but I have choreographed the actor so that the camera can find a new angle. It is a technique that always uses the movement of the actor to camouflage the movement of the camera.

Alfred Hitchcock, who is another director I admire greatly, sometimes used that technique during his middle years. Of course, it was more complicated for him, as the Steadicam did not exist and he had to do all those camera moves on a dolly, but the choreography was the same. You can see a lot of Hitchcock influence in *Basic Instinct*, but not so much in *Showgirls*. There is a scene, however, in which Cristal and Nomi are talking in a restaurant at Caesar's Forum shopping mall where I "steal" from *North by Northwest*. If you recall the scene between Cary Grant and Eva Marie Saint on the train, he shoots first over the shoulders, and then moves closer and closer, in a very simple and elegant way. That's one of my favorite dialogue scenes in all of moviemaking, and I borrowed from it shamelessly.

An aspect of filmmaking that I think you see clearly in *Showgirls* is the potential for expressing emotion through movement. When I was a young man, I wanted to be a painter, because I see painting as such a great expressive medium, a way to put a deeper sense of yourself, of your emotions, on canvas with the use of only a brush and some tubes of paint. Then, when I got a movie camera from my uncle, I moved slowly from painting to filmmaking over a period of five or six years—during which time I saw how I could use the camera like a brush, to use movement to express emotion. If you look at the later films of Sergei Eisenstein, such as *Ivan the Terrible*, you can see how he stylized the movement of the actors to express emotion, using the static framing to provide a measure for that movement.

European filmmakers have explored the possibilities of "painting" with the camera more than Americans because their movies are much more based on psychology, rather than storytelling. The "Hollywood formula" of three acts with a precise dramatic structure is so drummed into young filmmakers in the United States that they find it difficult to think in other terms. Most of the so-called masterpieces of European cinema cannot be understood in those terms at all. Movies by people such as Truffaut and Fellini are essentially nonlinear. There's no second or third act in *La Dolce Vita* because the film doesn't develop that way. It's much more like music, in that it moves from *allegro* to *allegretto* to *adagio* and so on. It follows feelings, emotional lines, rather than plot lines.

(Having said this, I have to confess that, in general, I would rather watch American movies than European movies, which are generally too slow-paced for me. Also, by now I've learned to like more dramatic structure than European films allow for.)

The first time I read Joe's script for *Showgirls*, I knew that I could not make this film in a way to satisfy myself, ethically and artistically, and at the same time satisfy the normal studio requirement that a director must meet the MPAA Rating Board minimum standards for an "R" rating. We knew rather early in the development of this movie that sexuality and sexual power would be one of the core dramatic issues, but we didn't think in terms of ratings. The emerging prospect of trying to direct an adult movie that deals with naked dancers within the arbitrary "R" strictures of the Rating Board made me very unhappy.

With *Basic Instinct*, I had been forced to submit and resubmit the film nine times before receiving their R-rated blessing. All that was removed was 22 seconds of "objectionable" material, and another 20 seconds were changed into closer or wider shots of the same take. Every second of the original can now be seen on videotape. Joe and I agreed that we would only discuss offers from production organizations willing to accept an "NC-17" rating for a film that would cost \$30-40 million. Five studios made offers—which I thought was quite amazing—and Chargeurs/Carolco, which will distribute through MGM/UA, made the best one. Ironically, with *Showgirls*, I got to direct an MGM musical!

I have been accused of being deliberately provocative in insisting upon making an NC-17 film, and I suppose that my insistence is provocation in its way. But I think of myself as provocative in a different sense: as a director who explores the difference between reality and the way in which we usually see reality portrayed. I feel that there is a huge discrepancy between what life really is and what we are supposed to see in the movies. There are many aspects of life that are not publicly acknowledged and that many people don't want to see as reality. For example, if you had tried a year ago to make a movie about the dangers of paramilitary militia groups in the United States, you would have been a revolutionary. Today, you would be a TV news producer who is too late with the story. There are a large number of other social and political facts in this country that are quietly ignored, and perhaps the most obvious one is sexual behavior.

Despite the fact that everybody fucks and that sexuality is simply a mammalian characteristic, American movies do not portray sex particularly realistically, if at all. There is both official censorship and economic censorship of sexual material at all levels in this country. Strangely enough, even hate speech and the stockpiling of military weaponry is better protected than sexual information, in a nation that prides itself on openness and the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. I think that the First Amendment is one of the cornerstones of democracy, a true sign of strength. It tells us that in American society you can say or show whatever you want to say or show—even if it is irritating, disgusting, unpleasant, shocking, or offensive to everyone else.



Censorship is a sign of a society's weakness. It demonstrates that the censors are afraid of ideas that are different from their own. It suggests that some people are too weak to deal with words or images with which they disagree. The First Amendment, however, supposes that the American people are strong enough to deal even with ideas and words that they abhor. The First Amendment is a statement of belief in the strength of the American citizen.

The best scientific studies on the influence of sex and violence in the media are all rather clear, too. No causal relationship has been found between being a frequent *Playboy* reader and becoming a rapist. There is no causal relationship between someone watching *Robocop* and holding up a gas station. There is often correlation, which is a different matter. Sex offenders may like to see pornography; people prone to violence may like violent movies. But that doesn't mean that one causes the other. In my films, I hold the mirror up to life. What you see is the sex and the violence that already exists in modern societies. But, of course, I sometimes push beyond the framework of reality, because that's my pleasure.

Politicians attack Hollywood because they—and perhaps the American public—don't want to look at the real problems. The big problems are in the American social structure: crime, drugs, the urban environment, poverty, lack of education, and the availability of guns. The politicians don't deal too much with those problems; it is much easier to blame Hollywood for causing decadence in American society—which seems heartless and cynical.



Gina Gershon as Cristal

I don't think that the religious moralists or right-wing feminists are heartless or cynical, but I think that they are similarly misguided in their attacks on sex in movies. Fundamentally, they both argue that a woman showing her tits is being degraded, is being exploited, is being humiliated, and that the act of showing her tits contributes to the downfall of civilization.

I don't think that's true. What that woman is doing is demonstrating our strong human instinct for procreation. Most heterosexual and bisexual men like to see tits and ass because those sights stimulate our sexual drives, our natural desire to fuck and create babies. Most women like to show off their bodies in skirts that reveal their legs or blouses that emphasize their breasts because they like to use their sexual power—they know that dressing this way will attract men who will ultimately give them babies. (Of course, this is not a conscious process.) That's the simple biology lesson of it all. We need to accept that we are just mammals who are running around doing one thing rather effectively, which is to procreate.

Sexuality and the uses of sexual power are central to *Showgirls*. However, all of the sex scenes in this film have a purpose in addition to simply stimulating sexual enjoyment. For example, one of the key scenes takes place early in the movie when Cristal visits the Cheetah strip club, and insists upon buying Nomi to perform a lap dance for Cristal's boyfriend, Zack. Nomi refuses until the club manager hears Cristal offer \$500. He forces Nomi to go with them. Essentially, what we see next is Nomi fucking a fully-clothed Zack, without really fucking him, while Cristal watches.

The levels of meaning within this scene and the interplay among the three primary characters here is rather complex. Ostensibly, Cristal is humiliating Nomi and demonstrating her power over Nomi by "renting" her against her will—literally imposing a form of slavery on her. However, Nomi had created an opportunity to meet Cristal earlier by manipulation and was aware of Cristal's interest in her. Nomi also knows that Zack, the entertainment director of a hotel, watched her pole dance.

When she begins the lap dance over Zack, Nomi reverses the power game. She uses her body to exert her power over Cristal's boyfriend who is, not coincidentally, Nomi's potential employer. Although Cristal bought the lap dance for Zack, it is obvious that he is really just a substitute for Cristal herself. Cristal is seduced and riveted by Nomi's sexuality. You could argue that Cristal is trying to seduce Nomi in a very complex way, and that the danger of losing her lover to this young woman is part of the excitement for her. You might also say that Nomi is deliberately playing the "victim game" to draw Cristal into her trap. Although it seems as though she is being exploited, she is well aware that \$500 is a lot of money for a lap dance and that her relationship with Al, the club manager, would have allowed her to refuse the dance. But the resistance that she displays makes the encounter even more exciting for both Zack and Cristal. And, in the end, she might be the seductress and controller of both of them. (For more details of my thinking about this scene, see the excerpt from my shooting script with storyboard drawings at the back of this book.)

When Cristal sends someone over to the club the next day to offer Nomi an audition for the chorus of "Goddess," is she successfully continuing her seduction and bringing her closer? Who's leading whom? Who's really in charge here?

There's a lot of ambiguity in the lap dance scene—the same sort of ambiguity that exists in the script for *Basic Instinct*. Some people are still not sure who the murderer is.

Contrary to what you read in movie magazines, the shooting of erotic scenes is rarely erotic on the set. It's acting; it's not real sex. In my films, the actors have seen detailed storyboards of the sex scene and are often receiving precise instructions from me while they are doing it. I have heard that some directors simply tell the actors to "Go for it, baby," and then mush the scene together with a series of dissolves. Those sex scenes simply suggest two people copulating.

But I prefer to use sex scenes for something else. The sex scene between Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct* is a good example. I story-boarded precisely every move and every angle in the scene and gave the boards to Sharon and Michael weeks ahead of time. It was a fairly long and complicated sex scene. Sharon would ask me what the camera was picking up. And I would explain to her what I wanted the camera to capture and why.

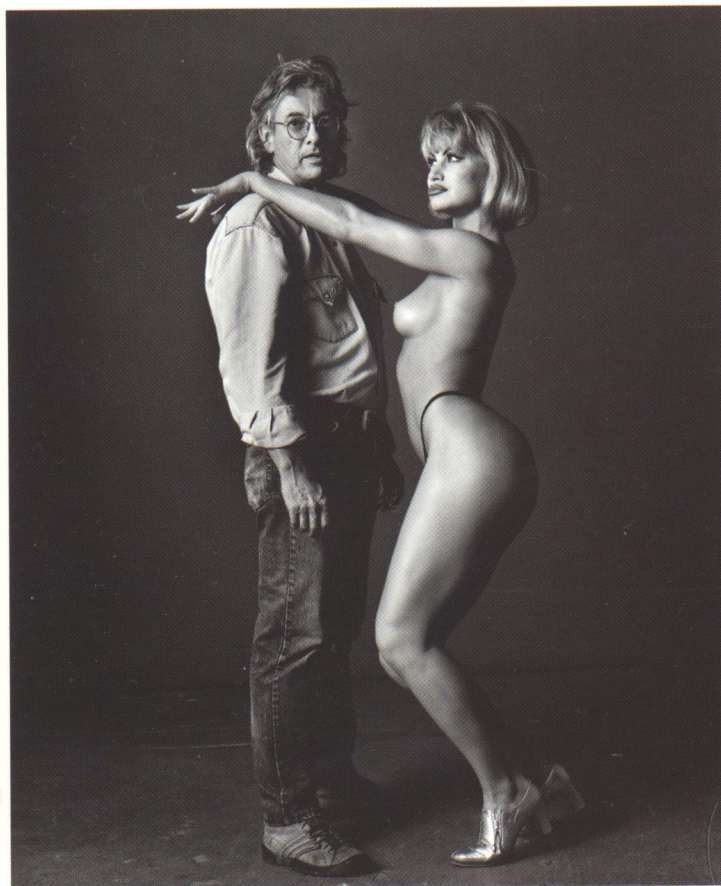
On the day of the shooting, there was no discussion necessary. Michael and Sharon knew what I wanted them to do. They took off their clothes and did it. I directed them very exactly, with no euphemisms: "Now you go down to her mouth, turn to this side, kiss her and move slowly down to her nipple so we can see your face. Now, lick her nipple..." and so forth. I try to be very neutral in the tone of my instructions because actors are often insecure about these scenes.

I know that when all those moves and angles that I storyboarded for Sharon and Michael were edited together, people thought that was a "hot" scene. And it probably is. But I like that scene not because it is about sex, but because it is a thriller scene expressed through sex. It is a scene in which the audience knows that this woman could be the same woman they saw committing the murder with the ice pick at the beginning of the movie. There are shots repeated from the first scene, and the music is the same as the first scene, so that the audience is constantly being reminded that Michael may be in danger. We see the same shots of the mirror on the ceiling, the brass bed, the tying up, the position, and the woman getting on top of him. And the audience is thinking: There's a blond woman, he gets an orgasm, and she will kill him. So I take them through the same psychological trajectory and maintain the tension while they look for clues. Otherwise, what would be the point of simply showing three minutes of fucking?

In a later scene in *Showgirls*, after Nomi has learned that Zack will be holding auditions for Cristal's understudy in "Goddess," she goes home with him and fucks him in his swimming pool. I shot it with a kind of romantic feeling, but again, I'm using the knowledge that the audience has about her ulterior motive. I don't do it as straight fucking. I have her fuck him the way she did in the lap dance, so

that this scene echoes the earlier one and the audience can see that Nomi is doing essentially the same thing in a different way. It is camouflaged as a romantic sex scene, but the audience emotionally absorbs that it is about something else, and they gain another insight into her character.

Nomi plays at being innocent, but proves to be quite calculating and manipulative. She also appears to be willing to pay any price for success, but eventually she finds the tab too high. Cristal has it all and likes to play with fire. Does she realize how much she endangers her life when she toys with Nomi? Zack helps both of them and fucks both of them—and is used by both of them. As the three of them swirl around in this intricate dance, their motives become more and more ambiguous. Like most of us, I believe that these three characters are not entirely sure of their own motivations. I am fascinated by that lack of clarity. The human mind is not a “normal” computer, and people are often unaware of their own motives. In some ways, that is the essence of life for me: We want things desperately, but we don’t know exactly why we want them. I think that we are propelled by ideas and motivations that are often beyond our consciousness. We cannot pin these hidden drives down. You cannot say exactly what it is. It is as if there is no “real” reality. There are many realities. ✕



Paul Verhoeven with Rena Riffel as Penny



Gina Ravera as Molly

One explanation of my interests as a filmmaker is that I was trained as a mathematician at the University of Leiden in Holland. I studied mathematical physics and completed my doctorate in mathematics, with a special concentration on the general theory of relativity. From a physicist's point of view, there is no single reality. There are many realities coexisting at one time. This is part of my philosophy of life and I suppose it is also a continuing theme in my films. Even in an action movie such as *Total Recall*, I enjoyed developing the idea that Arnold Schwarzenegger and the audience were experiencing two realities simultaneously, and both are consistent throughout the movie. Is Arnold in a dream or is it real? Did he save Mars or is he still sitting in the machine dreaming? It is my own feeling that both versions of reality are true. There are similar levels of reality in *Robocop* and *Basic Instinct*—and certainly in *Showgirls*.

Nomi is an interesting character to me because she appears to be an ordinary pretty girl and yet has many sides; she seems willing to do anything to achieve her goals but makes a moral choice in the end. She is a particularly rich character because she is a shadowy one. When Cristal tells her, "We're all whores, darlin'" she doesn't realize that she is pressing a hot button for Nomi. We discover that Nomi had been a prostitute after her parents were killed, so that words such as "whore" or "mother" cause her to react. She's linked traumatically to that word "whore," because that is the past she is trying to escape. The movie is partly about just how far she will go.

When Nomi's friend Molly is raped at a party and no one in that tight Las Vegas show business world is willing to defend her or even speak up on her behalf, Nomi reaches the breaking point. My interpretation of her character would be that she has accepted the exploitation of herself and played by their amoral rules because she feels strong enough to turn the tables, to defend herself. It is only when she sees the cruelty of those Vegas rules applied to a defenseless person such as Molly that her ethical sense is awakened. Molly may be the only truly decent person in the whole movie. She is certainly the ethical center of the story. All of the men are sleazy and dominating; most of the other women have their own hungry agendas. Molly is the only person who is sincerely concerned about Nomi, who sees her talent, supports her, and then sees her going down the road of corruption. She warns Nomi not to let herself be "sucked into it." When Nomi pushes Cristal from the staircase, she crosses a line. Molly turns her back on Nomi. Even then, Nomi pursues her goals. It is only when Nomi sees her friend hurt and deserted by the rest of the Vegas pack that she realizes that if she accepts this completely corrupt society, she would accept anything. It is the last step toward sacrificing her soul.

There are many parallels between *Showgirls* and *Keetje Tippel*, a film I made in Holland in 1975. *Keetje*, or Katie, comes with her family to Amsterdam to find her fortune. In this rather Dickensian story, set in the 19th century, Katie starts as a prostitute, then becomes a nude model, and finally marries a charming

opportunist (played by Rutger Hauer). Eventually, she loses him. Not defeated, she finds another guy who is richer and aristocratic, and marries him.

Katie is a country girl who comes to the big city and becomes corrupted by the world of capitalism ushered in with the Industrial Revolution. The difference between Katie and Nomi is that although both make immoral decisions in the pursuit of success or money, Katie never looks back. She just gets richer and richer, without having ethical qualms. In the last scene in the movie, in which Katie is licking the blood from the wound on this rich guy's head, she is literally sucking him dry—like a vampire. It is a harsh, but honest, view of life.

Because Nomi finally rejects the corrupt world that is offering her success for her soul, she is saved, redeemed. It is sort of a Christian morality tale. As she picks up her bags and is hitchhiking out of Las Vegas, the guy who gives her a ride asks her what she won. She answers, "Me."

Despite all of the manipulative and immoral things she did, she emerges with her dignity and is off to another life with a clean slate. As I think about it, this is a very American vision, a tale of redemption. In reality, most people who are willing to compromise everything and finally have the prize in their hands don't throw it away as Nomi does. They behave much more like Katie Tippel, or like the girl at the end of *Spetters*, who starts to build her fortune on the ruins of the young man who has just committed suicide. They take the money and don't look back.

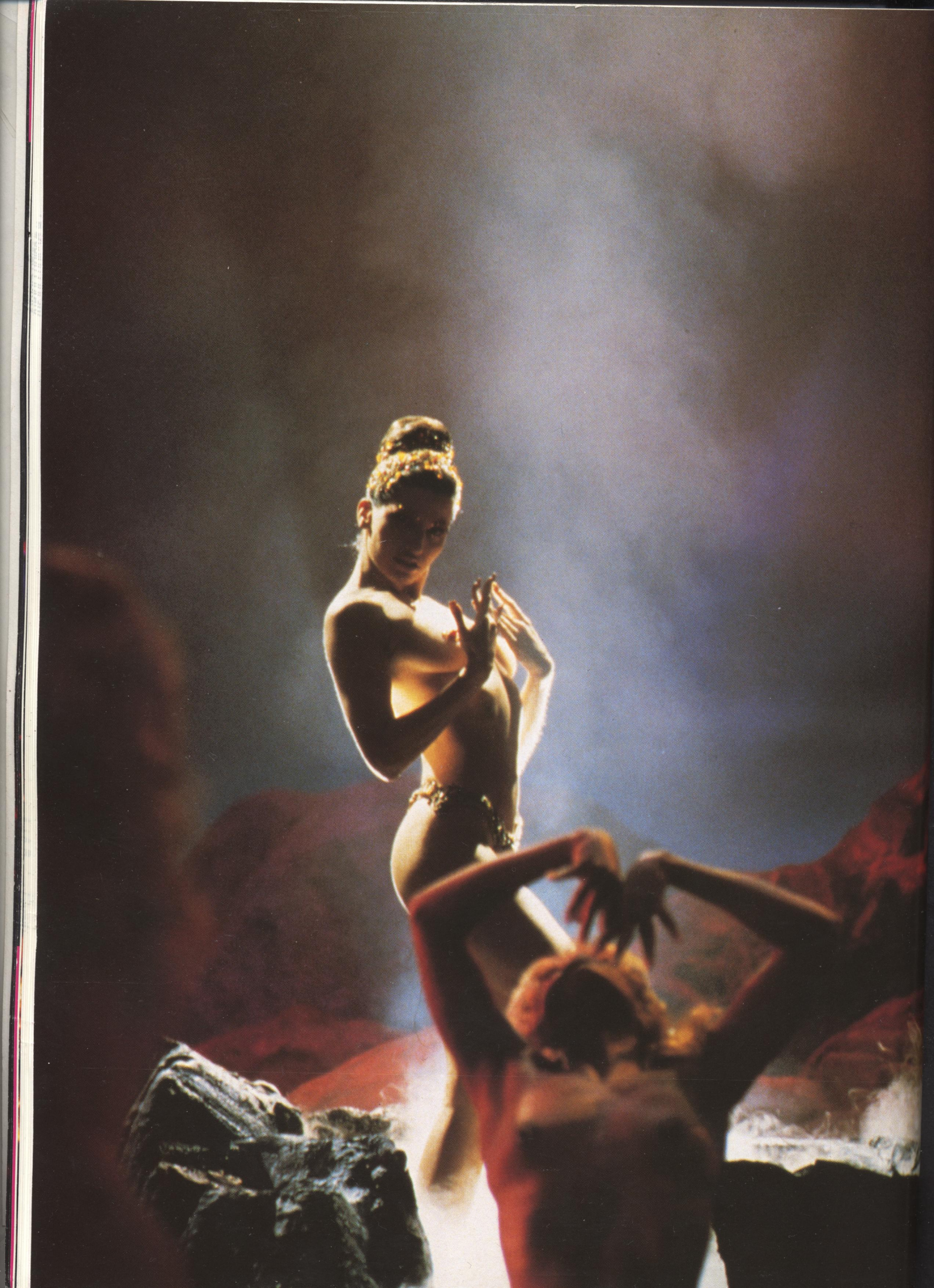
This theme of redemption is part of American mythology. American movies are filled with these fairy tales in which everything comes out right and everybody goes to the seashore. It is an illusion that is supported by the whole culture, and is probably part of the larger unwillingness to look at unpleasant realities.

Of course, my American movies reflect that mythology of redemption, too. I have been living and working in the United States for almost a decade and I can see changes in my attitudes, my life, and my films. It is inevitable that I am becoming Americanized. If you look at the difference between the films Alfred Hitchcock made in England and the ones he made in the United States, you can see the same sort of change. I am sure that it was not something he tried to do. It's something that just happens. When your surroundings change you, your perceptions also change, as do your interests and your rhythms. I have a much different rhythm when I work here than when I worked in Holland. In my country, things are much greyer. In the United States there is more contrast, more social and political tension. More drama. More fun!

I suppose that if my films reflect that tension, and even if they provoke strong responses, I fulfill some function as an artist. Perhaps, now, as an American artist.



Elizabeth Berkley as Nomi



Douglas Kirkland

Goddesses

I remember when I was fifteen years old in high school in Holland, my art teacher was talking about one of Manet's nudes. And he said: "A woman's breast is the most beautiful thing in the world." Now, at that age, I had never touched a woman's breast. I had seen them in paintings and in pornographic magazines. But I'll never forget that his words struck me as absolutely true. Breasts have a most wonderful shape! That could be an aesthetic response or a Freudian one. Maybe it's just a biological instinct. But out of whatever drives or motivations, I find the female body absolutely beautiful. Every female body is beautiful.

Douglas Kirkland's photographs capture the excitement and the extravagance of the first "Goddess" dance number in our fantasy Las Vegas show. The original seed of the idea for this scene came from Joe Eszterhas. Joe and I were asked by Chanel to do a commercial for them after they saw *Basic Instinct*. One of his proposals was a couple in wonderful clothes in front of a volcano in Hawaii that would be erupting. The commercial was never made, but perhaps seeing the volcano in front of the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas reminded him of the concept again and he incorporated it into this huge dance extravaganza.

This dance number begins with a volcano erupting onstage. Lava flows everywhere. The dancers are all terrified. There is chaos and panic.

In the midst of all the rumbling and shaking, the earth cracks open, and out of the fiery mouth of this fissure emerges the

Goddess. She is a combination of all those mythological earth mothers, and immediately the other dancers come to her for leadership. Her sense of confidence spreads among them and they begin to dance in a more fluid, coordinated fashion. She transforms the fire of the volcano into fiery passions for herself and the other dancers. Their movements evolve into a sensual dance of celebration.

I actually shot this number three different times in the movie. The first time is when Nomi sees the show for the first time with a sense of awe and envy for Cristal, who is starring as the Goddess. Her face tells us, "Wow, I want to be there." Then, the second time you see the "Goddess" number is when she gets into the chorus, and the third time you see it is at the end of the movie, when she dances the leading role after causing Cristal to be hospitalized.

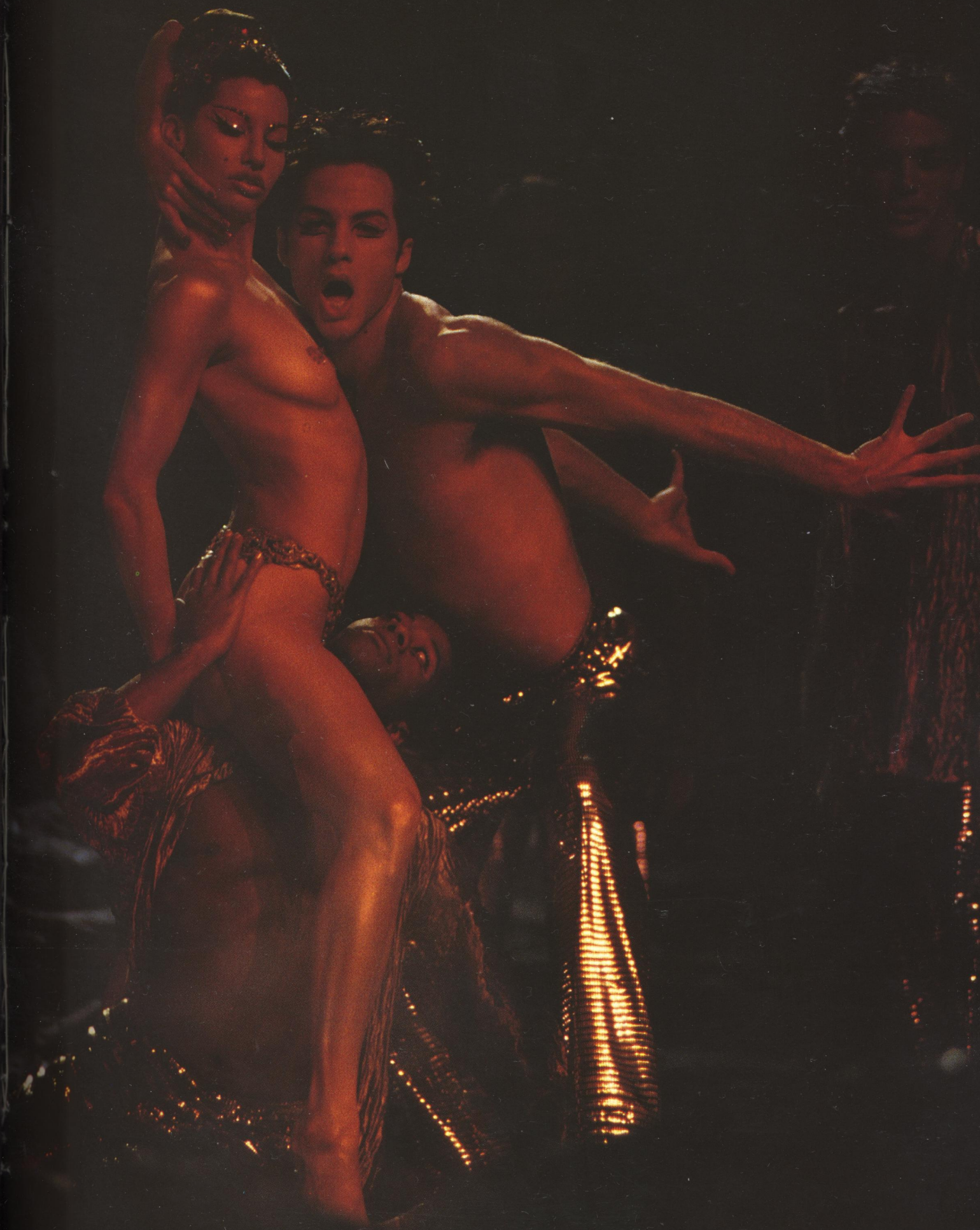
I ended up shooting it all the way through three times, each time in a little different way. The first time, of course, it's Nomi's point of view, as she is in the middle of the audience. It's shot with a static camera, which looks from that point of view. The second time, when she goes on stage as a member of the chorus, I did this version all with a Steadicam, following her onstage so that now the audience is visible behind her. The third time, I did it in yet another way. I used a crane shot, with a very long pullback, starting on Nomi and pulling back slowly to see that she is now the center of the whole thing, the queen of the ball.















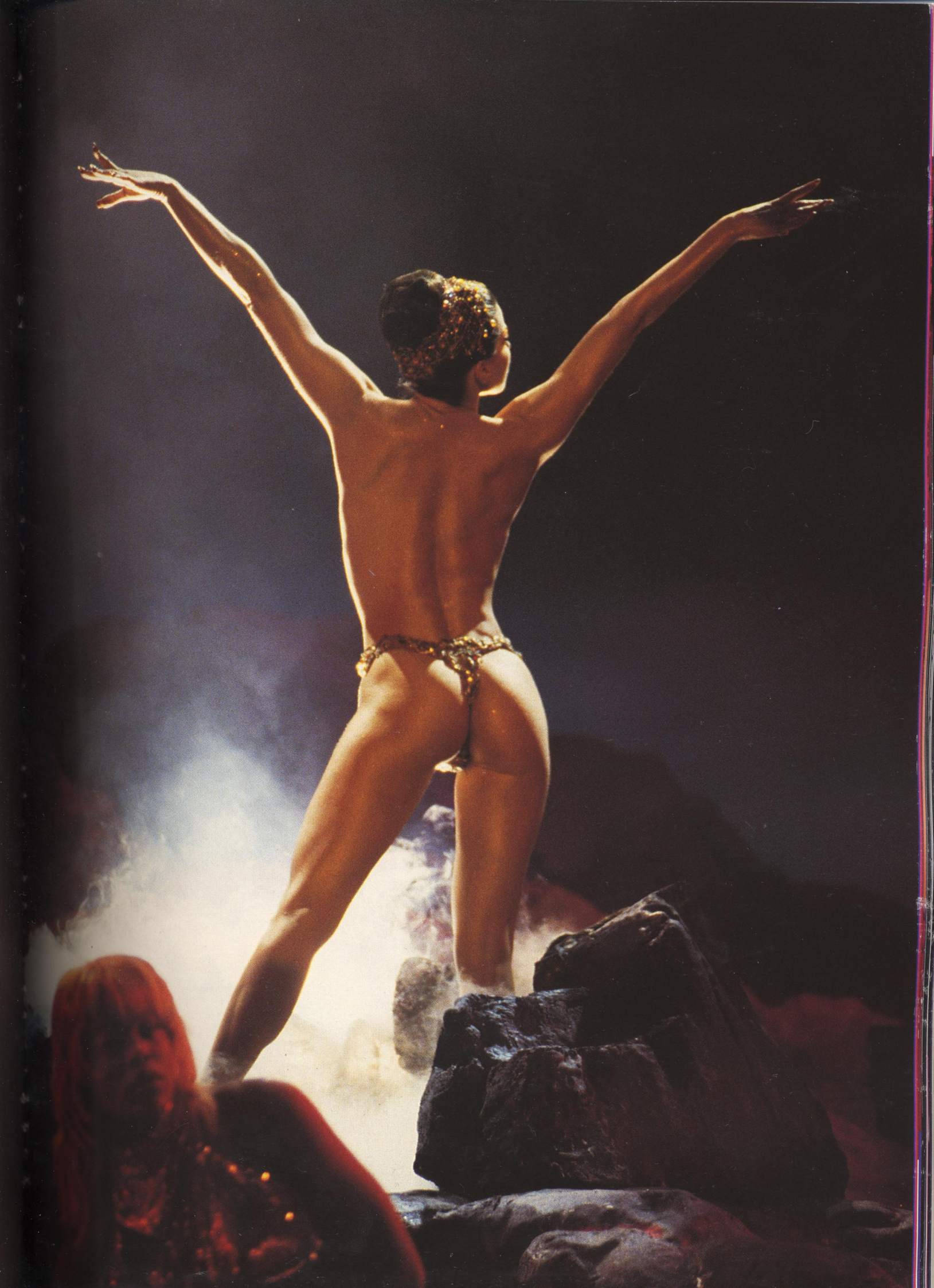


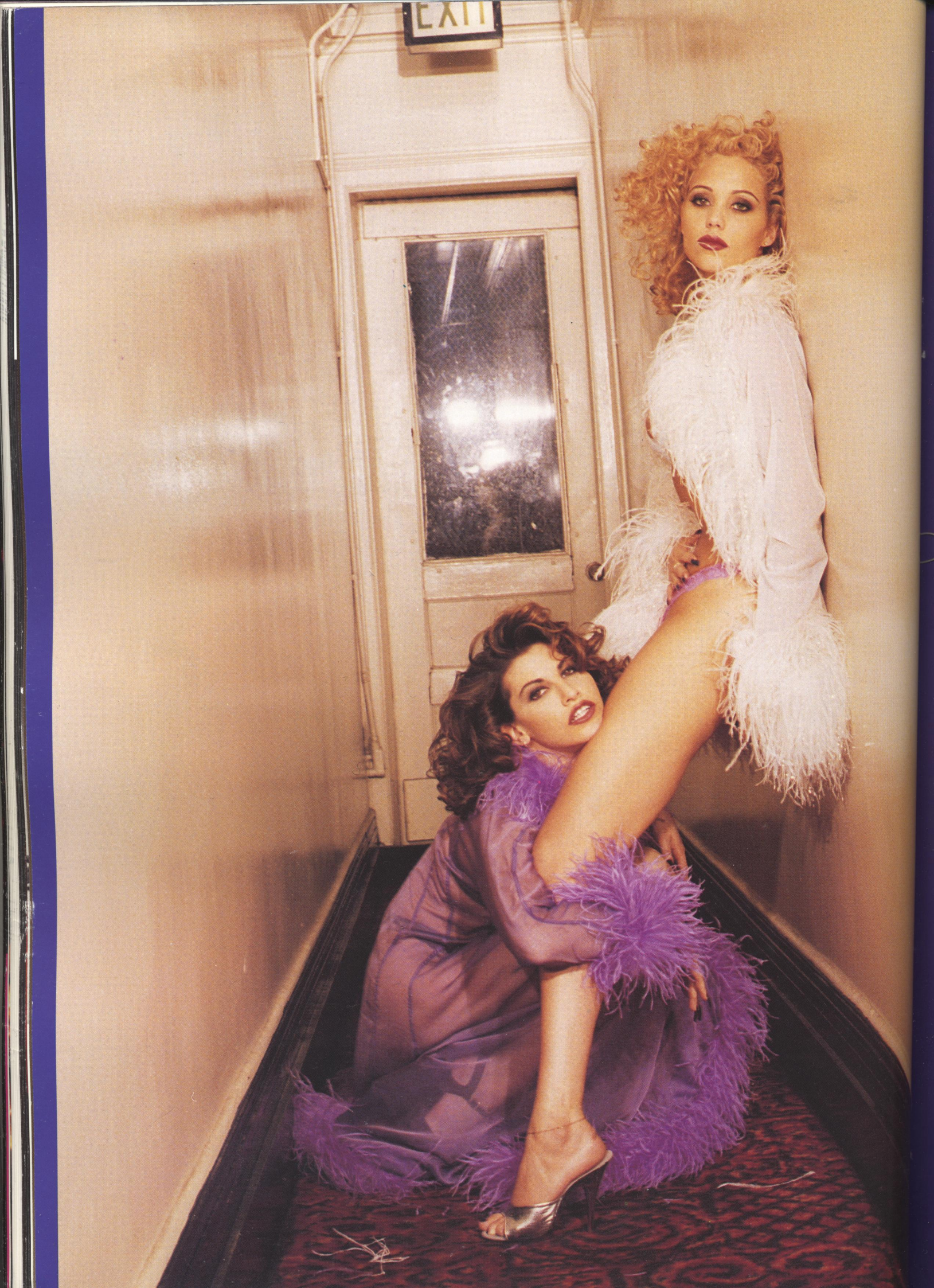












Bettina Rheims

Chemistry

Bettina plays with an interesting sort of eroticism in these photographs. These pictures are her interpretations of the sexual atmosphere in certain Las Vegas hotel rooms. The atmosphere is a bit sleazy, a bit decadent, and in the meantime, she makes the girls extremely beautiful and soft. But she's clearly playing here with the concepts of the movie, trying in her way to say, "Don't forget, this is not happening in some farmhouse in Kansas, is it?" This is her vision of Vegas.

In some of these pictures, Bettina seems to make Nomi into some sort of Lolita. She is toying with Elizabeth's relationship to the character. There is a great deal of innocence in Elizabeth—at least, superficially. However, I'm not so sure how far she is from Nomi. I think there might be a lot of soul connection with Nomi and especially the strengths of Nomi.

Bettina is presenting her as a young girl who is playing with sex without seeming to know what the consequences would be. "Look at me, look at my tits!" You can even see her vagina outlined in her panties. She is acting out her sex in a sort of innocent way. All these photographs are doing that. They are saying one way, I am sexy, I am fun. You'd be amazed at the things I could do.... But, still playing a certain innocence. Ultimately, Nomi is not innocent at all.

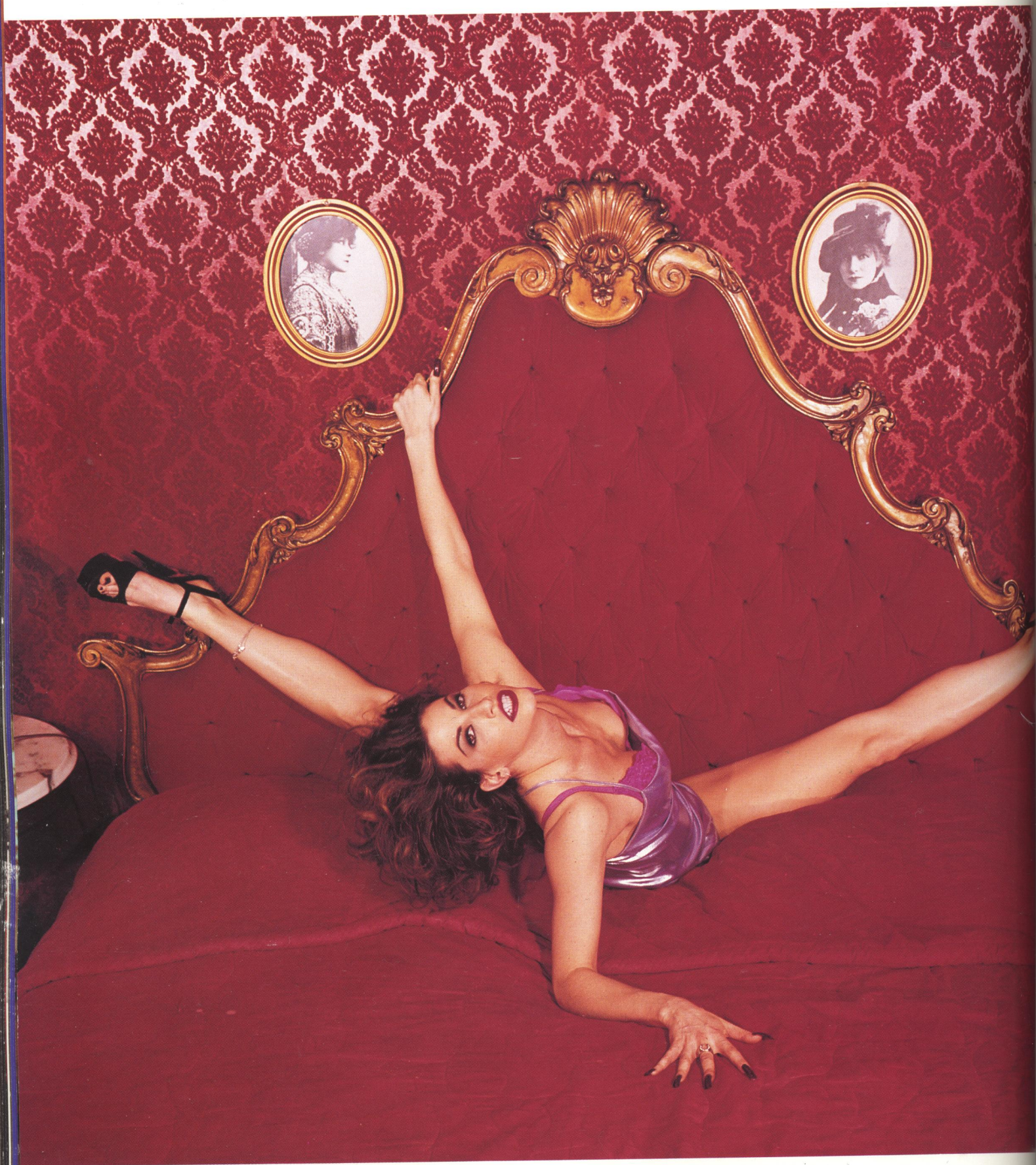
It's not clear if the
two primary
women

characters in this movie—Nomi and Cristal—have a lesbian relationship. But they are fascinated by each other, and they have a power relationship that changes as the story evolves. Ultimately, they manifest the same bisexual component—the same potential for homosexual interest—that all of us have. But more important, when these two women kiss each other at the end of the movie, it is an emotional moment, not a sexual one. This was the scene that I used when I tested Gina and Elizabeth together, because the chemistry had to be right. It's that chemistry that Bettina Rheims captures in her photographs of the two women. It is still difficult for a lot of people to accept two women kissing. I want my audiences to forget all of their heterosexual predispositions and allow that scene in the film to grab the bisexual possibilities in their souls and make them surprised that they accepted it.

















Mary Ellen Mark

Strippers

Mary Ellen Mark's photographic portraits express a stark, surrealistic approach to life. She takes people out of their natural environment and puts them in a different setting. Although the sets of the strip club have a gritty reality, these portraits of the actors were photographed outside the set. The moment you take them out of the set and put them against a blank wall, you achieve the sort of effect Salvador Dali did when he placed everyday objects in the desert. In fact, by her use of the plain backdrop, she's emphasizing that it is a photo studio. So she takes these people—who appear natural in the strip club—and she puts them somewhere else and you suddenly see how unreal they are. Her photographs achieve a rather alienating effect. When seen in the context of my movie, she seems to be suggesting the absurdity of the costumes and makeup. I suppose that there really is an element of the absurd in these strip shows. I think Mary Ellen wants to show how exuberant or over the top these minimalistic costumes are. They only make sense in a place where the women are surrounded by two or three hundred men who are paying \$10 each to get a glimpse of tit.

In a strange way, Mary Ellen's work even emphasizes a certain ugliness of the human body, because the cold black-and-white photography shows you every vein, every skin blemish, every irregularity of their bodies. These

black-and-white photos give the strippers their humanity back. When you see these women in the Cheetah Club dancing and stripping, with all the different colored lights playing softly on them and the music supporting their movement, they are glamorized, eroticized. But here, as they stare directly into the camera, you are forced to examine them like butterfly specimens pinned to the display box. Because Mary Ellen's pictures of the Cheetah Club set are in black-and-white, they remove the eroticism of the colored lights. If you think about the displays of feathers by mating birds and of all the completely over-the-top colors in nature that are used in various mating rituals, you understand why the colored lights are in strip clubs. You take the colors out and suddenly the dancers lose their sexual innuendo and become human beings.

By posing the dancers and freezing them, Mary Ellen makes us see them in a different way yet again. They are supposed to be moving, because stripping is, of course, moving and dancing. It's all showing "sexual" curves, continuously, from constantly changing perspectives. Playing with that movement all the time on stage and changing it every split second is the stimulus. There is a different light playing on a different part of the body each moment, so the body is continuously showing its erotic aspects as much as possible while stripping. When you stop the action in a photograph, suddenly the body is frozen in one position, seen from just one static angle. Again, the effect is alienating.

Mary Ellen tried to capture the essence of the movie in these photographs. They are posed for her camera.

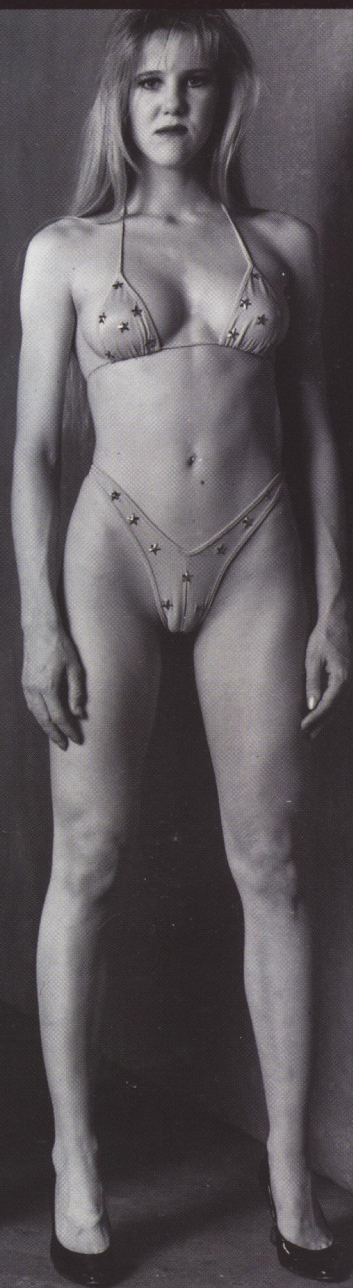
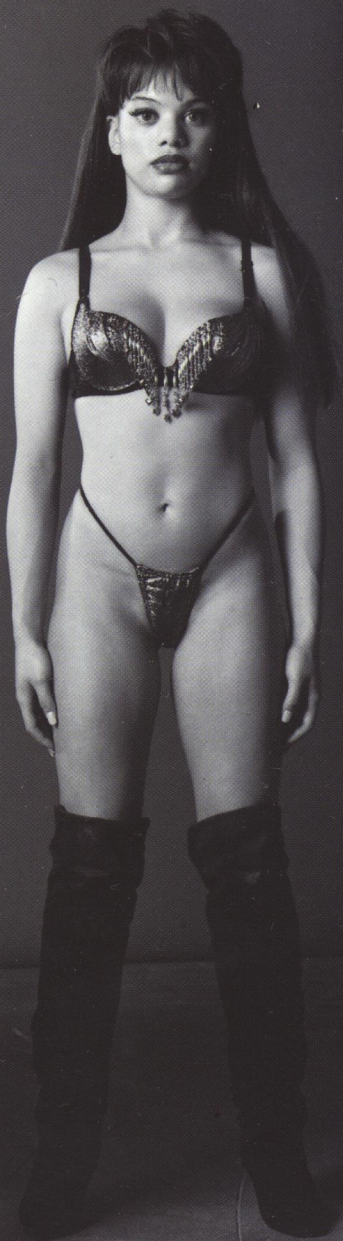
Most of them are not shots that appear in the movie.

I think that she tried to capture the emotion of the movie and translate it into photo-

graphs, so that people who have

seen the movie can say,

"Yeah, that's what it's
all about."









Glenn Plummer as James









Kyle MacLachlan as Zack >









Murray Close

Avenging Angels

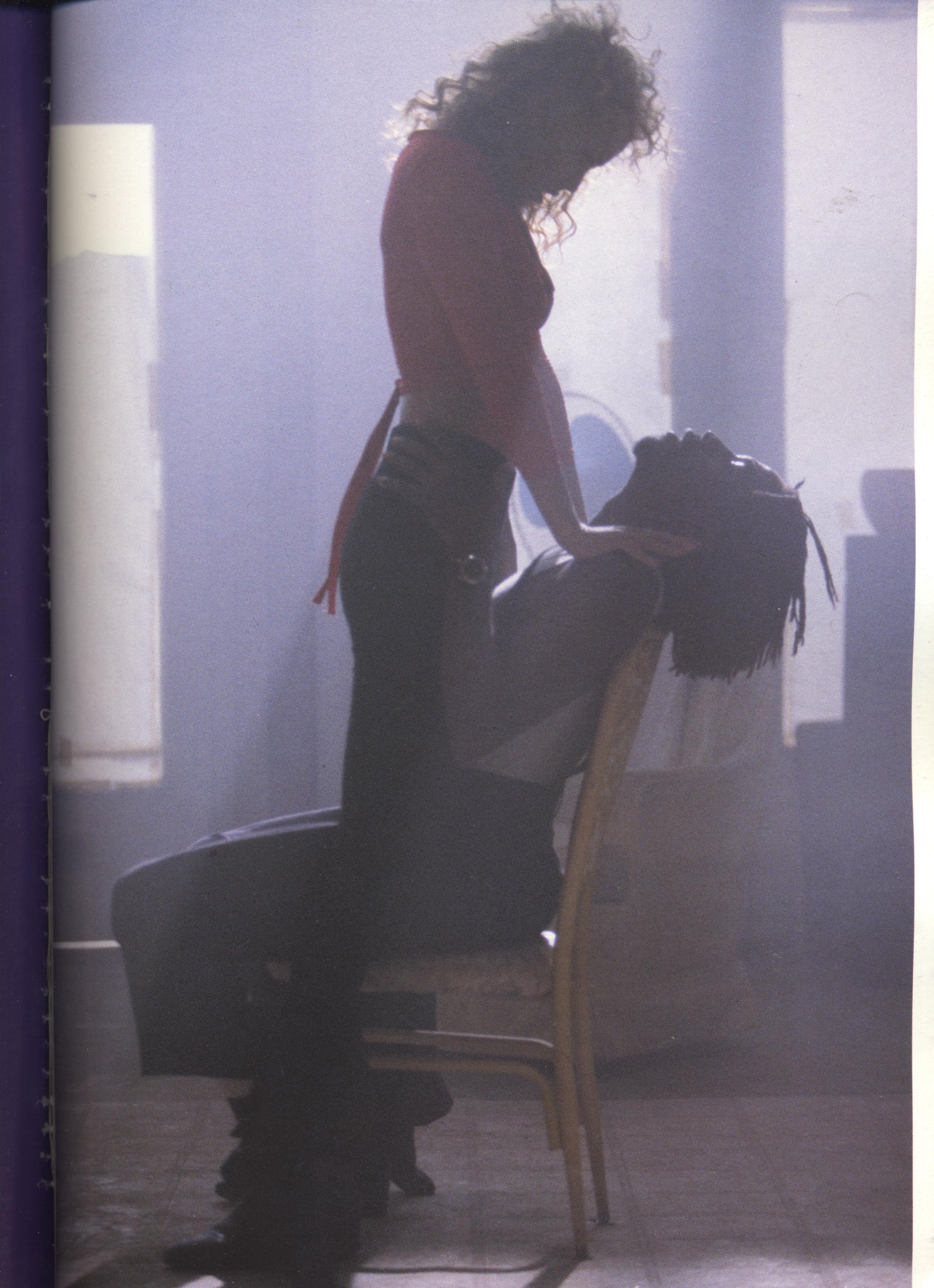
As you can see in these dramatic photographs by Murray Close, the second big production number of this Las Vegas show is a sadomasochistic fantasy we called "The Avenging Angel." Joe basically had the idea of the Goddess coming out of the volcano, but the concept of this S & M dance came from our choreographer, Marguerite Pomerhn-Derricks. As it opens, the Goddess has been captured by a male-dominated motorcycle gang and has been brought to some sort of warehouse, where she is blindfolded and hung from the ceiling in chains. The essence of the number is that the males, even associating with other females, want to dominate her, to gang rape her. They rip her clothes off, but she fights them and the men disappear and she becomes the center of an all-female group of Amazons who struggle with her for power.

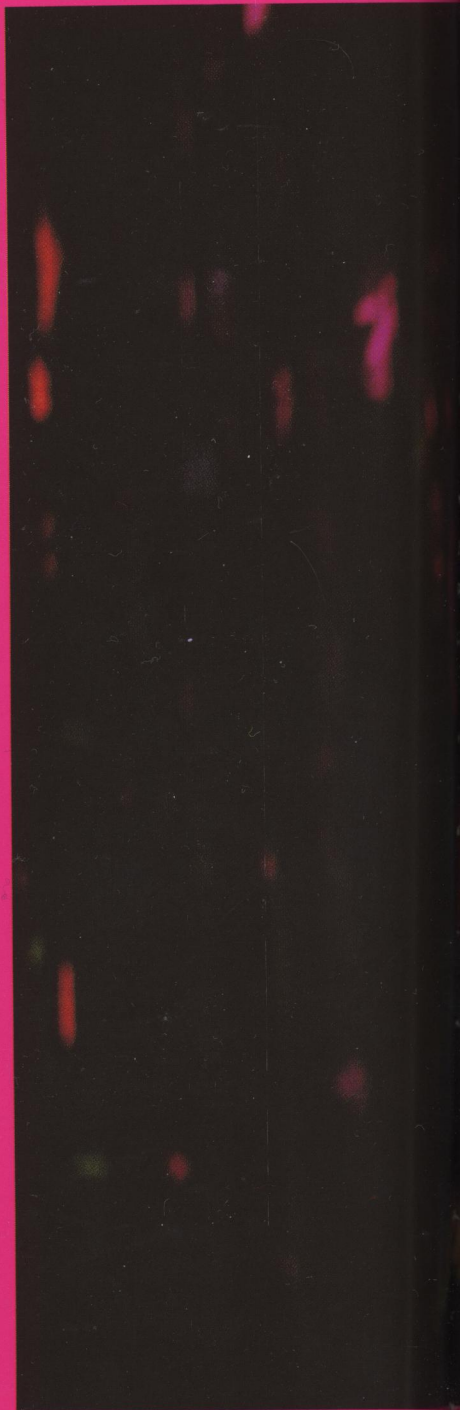
That was the original story. In fact, the original dance scenario went further and had Cristal as the Avenging Angel killing everybody with flame throwers. But I cut that out. Because of the story line of the film, I had to concentrate on the second part of this dance number, a duet of Nomi and Cristal. There are nearly no males left on stage; they're all in the background. I focus on the two women—Cristal and Nomi—fighting in the midst of this Amazon group. The subtext is that in the career power struggle between them, Cristal has thwarted Nomi's attempt to get the assignment as understudy for the Goddess role. And at this point in the

movie, Nomi has just heard that she's been fucked over by Cristal. She goes onstage with very angry thoughts. Cristal is enjoying a moment of triumph, expressing this in the choreography. She's in charge; she sets the rules; she humiliates Nomi.

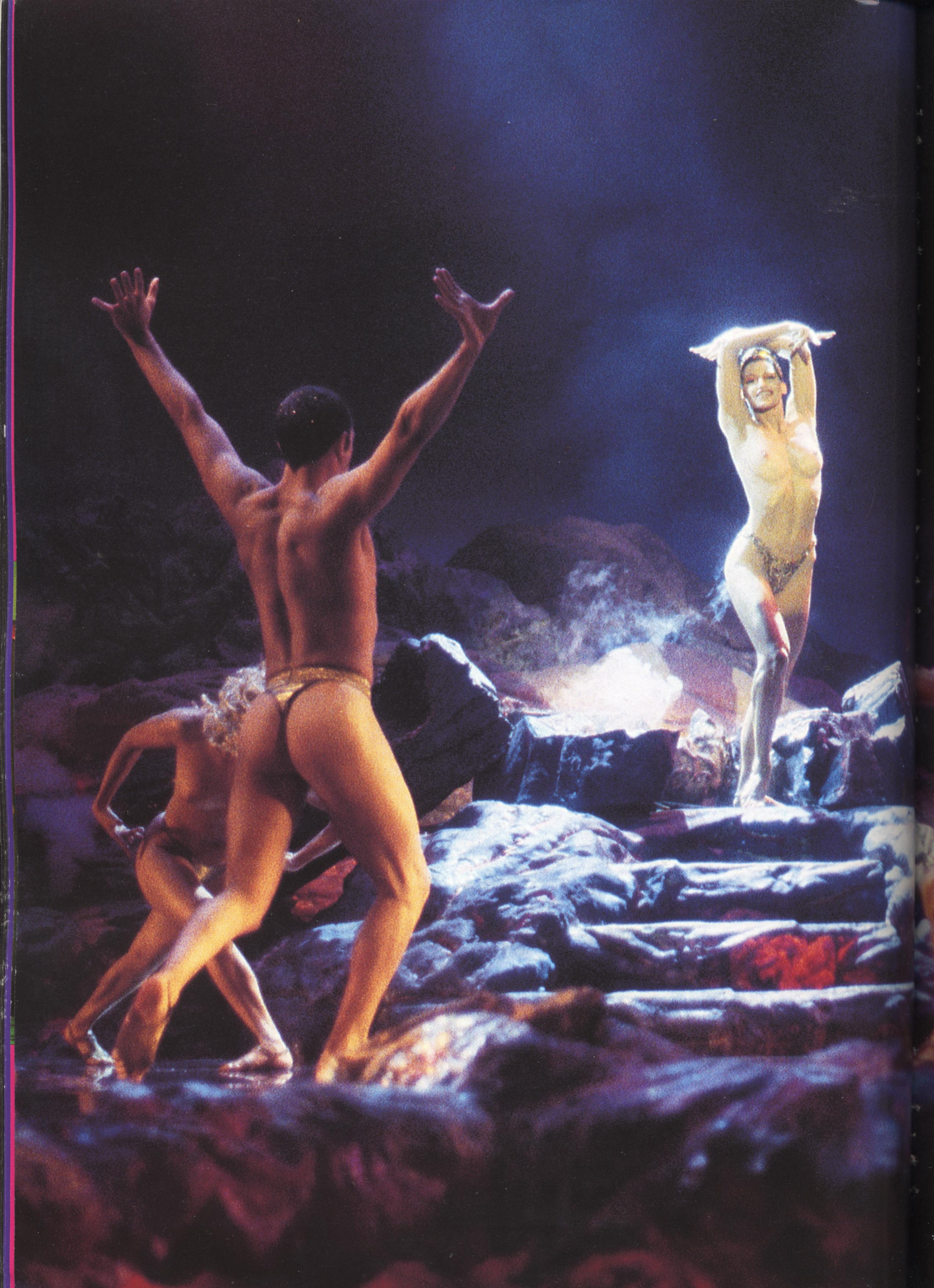
I had just read the book about Marilyn Monroe called *Goddess* and so when we were talking about what this Las Vegas show would be, I said let's call the whole show "Goddess." In the opening number, the Goddess is "born." She comes out of the earth and she appeases the confusion and panic on earth, and everything becomes harmonious. In the second dance production, the S & M number, she's exploited for her body. In the first number she's naked, but there's no exploitation. Everybody follows her—they just do whatever she does. She's commanding, she is dominating. In the second number, there's this attempt to use the female body for exploitation. And then in the third production number she leaves the earth again, glorified.

Here we jump forward in time to the end of the Goddess's existence on earth. Basically, I paralleled Christian mythology, in which the Messiah leaves or ascends. Only this is a nearly naked female messiah. When I told Dave Stewart the idea for this last number, he decided that if I was going to take us all to church, what we needed for music was some over-the-top gospel. As she rises up from among her followers who are dancing beneath her, she even strikes a sort of crucifixion pose. Murray Close has captured the emotion and energy of this finale perfectly in his photographs. This dance sequence was called "Bliss," and it is the spectacular climax to "Goddess," a Vegas extravaganza.









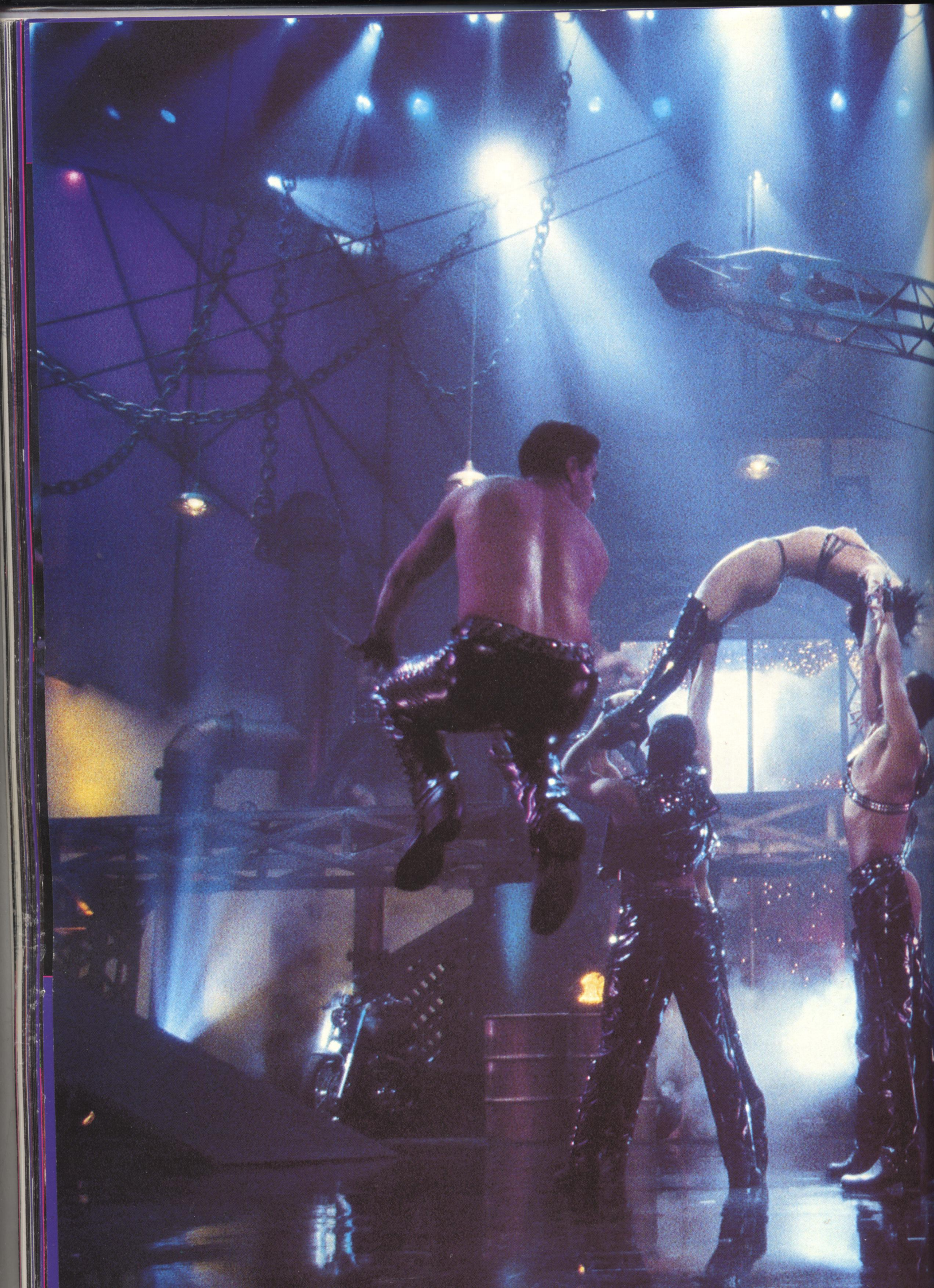


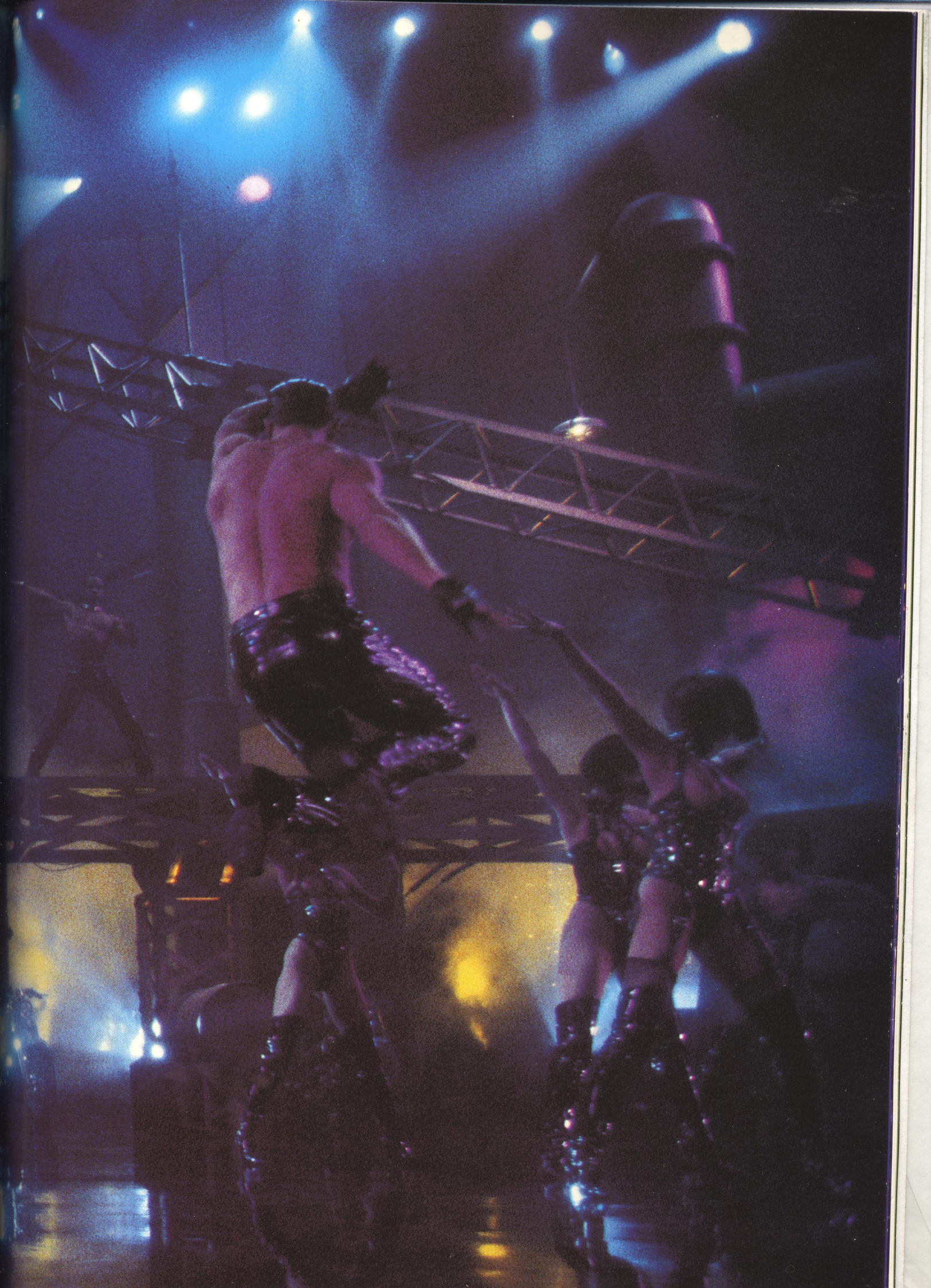


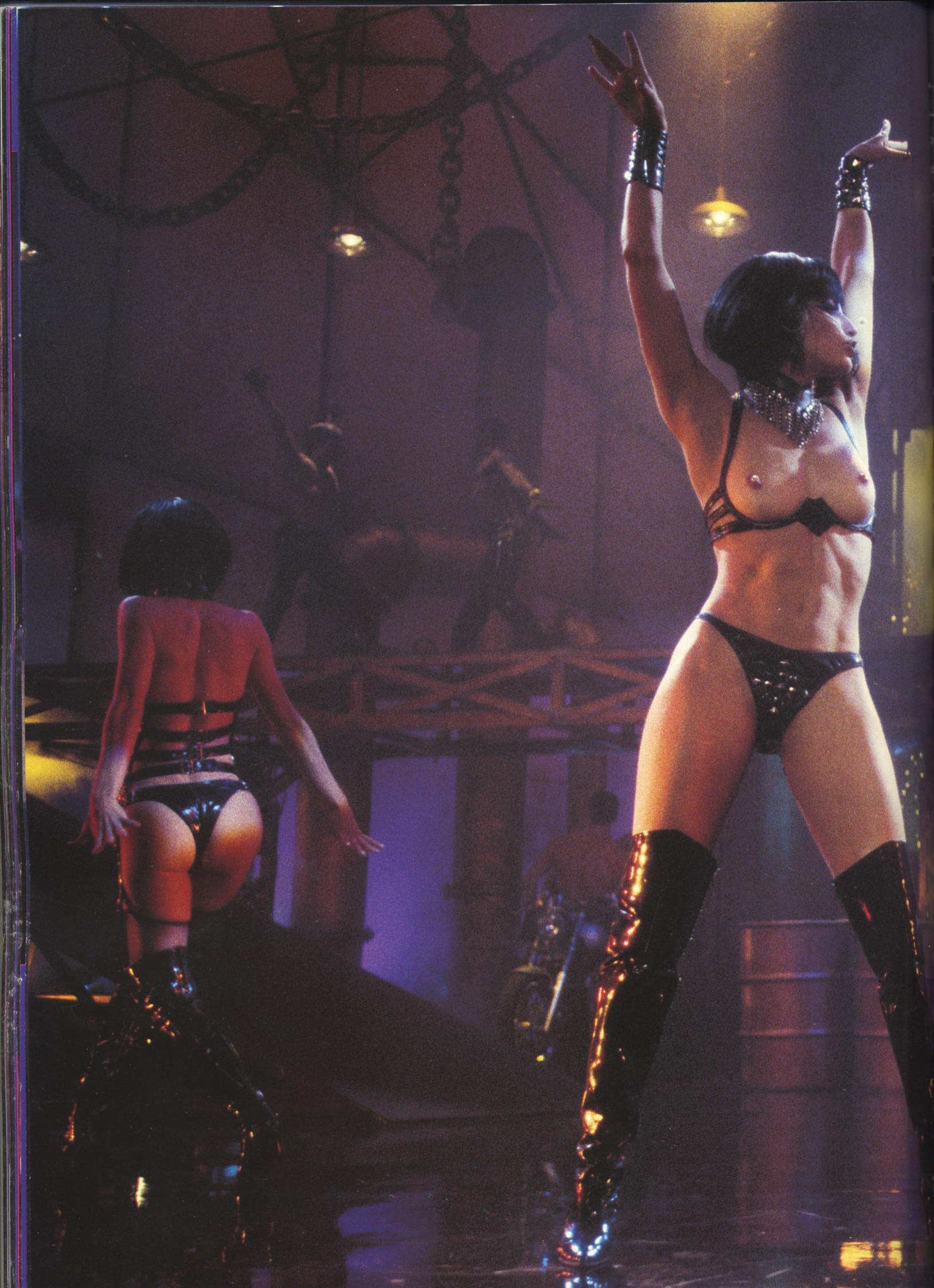


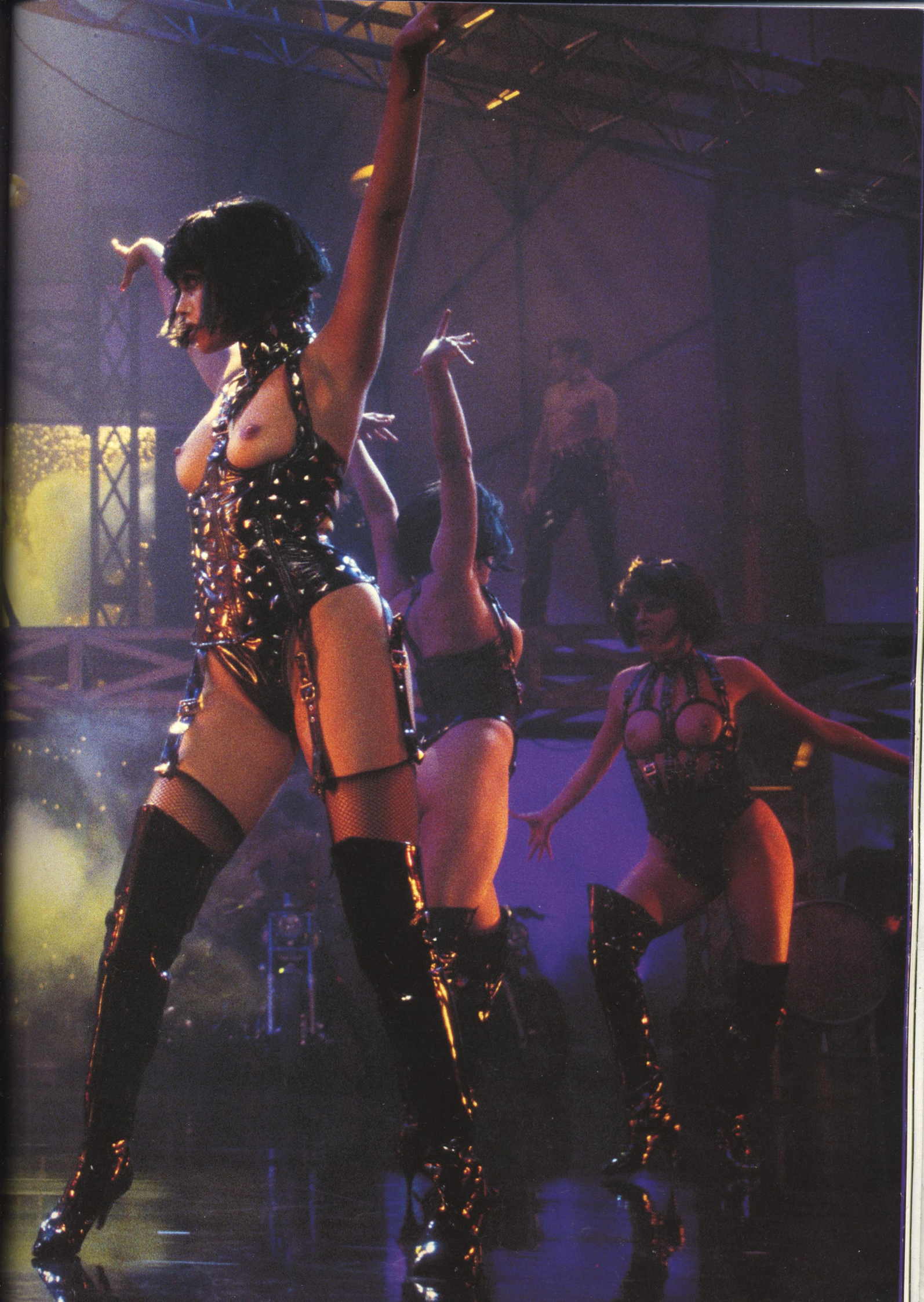






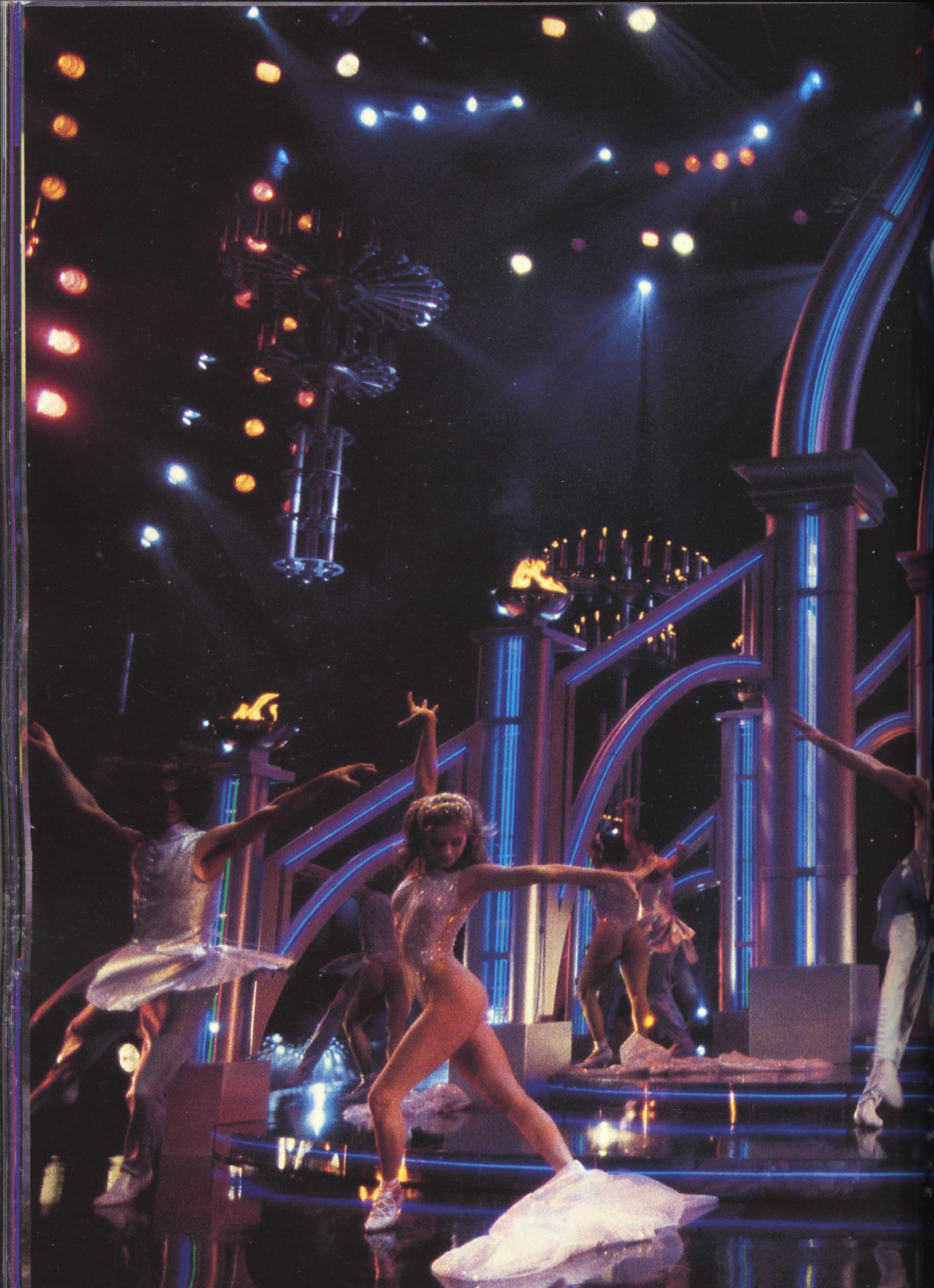


















Private



SHOOTING THE SCRIPT



Normally, when I direct a movie, I make detailed drawings of each scene of the script in sequence, indicating the type of shots, the angles, and the way in which I envision the shots being edited together. This process, called storyboarding, produces a sort of lengthy cartoon strip of the whole movie. I conceptualize visually, and the process of making these drawings helps me to think through every step in the making of a film. When I directed *The Fourth Man*, all of the storyboards were completed before we started shooting, and I have had the luxury of elaborate storyboards on all my American movies.

However, with *Showgirls*, we were rushed into production and there was no time to prepare storyboards in advance. I ended up making the drawings right in my script before the next day's shooting on a day-to-day basis. What you see in these four sample pages is a sort of sketchbook, a visual diary of my thoughts about how this film should come together.

Actually, I am just as happy that I did not make my usual detailed preparations in this case. I think it might have been unnecessary and perhaps even hampering to be too precise and too clear from the beginning. I was working with a cast with many young actors I had not worked with before, and I was not sure how far I could push them in certain directions. So I tried to use my knowledge of the people who I was working with as I created the storyboards each day.

Day by day I felt better, because I could see how the actors worked together and how they looked through the lens, and I used that in the drawings. It was a kind of direct feedback that I never tried before. I could integrate my feelings about who they were and how they behaved into the drawings. Each night, before or after dinner, I sat down with my script and spent an hour or so creating the storyboards for the next day's shooting. I truly came to enjoy the spontaneity that it allowed me to have.

- Normi
indicates
pale-sit
-sit
flare--

bounces
means the curtain
Nomi fest, they
enter

(No mic walky
 to left
 - other music -

Games?
needing
TRACK
BACK

- Sheddy gets up
- To chair and back ^{James} ~~movable~~ ^{→ however}
- Her left leg on his shoulder
- Removing S-string 1 - looking at C
- Turn ass to Zach - Crystal
- Remove S-string completely
- Dance back and forward to C/2
- Forward C - in front of her
- Back to Zach - sit on his lap
- grinding
- Up to side of 2
- Leg on shoulder
- Down to sit - grinding
- Down to ground - grinding
- Up to face - grinding wild
- he comes.

Crystal takes lead

we might
be on other
sides of
axis, but
we can
change back
at end of
⑦ when turn

a bit
wider than
Zach's it's
this Prov.

She comes up
again

⑥ 44
closer

613

looks at crystal
themselves
turns back
to Zack

in name

743

* 88 *

CRISTAL (smiles)
 It's about fun.

The MUSIC GOES ON. It is blasting, heavy metal rock and roll: Aerosmith.

And Nomi comes back and stands in her nightie in front of the sitting Zack. She very slowly takes off her nightie. Her body is stunning. She is completely naked. Zack looks at her body. Behind her, Cristal looks at her body.

Nomi leans in very close to Zack... her breasts brushing his face... as her body starts to move... he smiles, looks at Cristal... and then, as Nomi moves against him, his smile fades... and this is suddenly very sensuous, very serious... her body is up against his as she moves... and then she turns.

She presses her nakedness against his lap... he puts his head back... she looks up, as she presses against him... her eyes are on Cristal's, who isn't smiling now either... whipping her long hair... Zack raises his hands to hold her hips, stops himself... as she presses herself squiggling, dancing against him, her butt hard into his lap, she cups her breasts, squeezes them, throws her hair back, her eyes on Cristal.

35 INT. OUTSIDE THE BACK ROOM - NIGHT
 James Smith stands at the other side of the bamboo curtain, watching her body, rapt.

ANOTHER BOUNCER
 What are you doin' here, man?

JAMES
 (after a beat, looks at him)
 Nothin'.

ANOTHER BOUNCER
 You want it, you pay for it.

And James moves away.

36 INT. THE BACK ROOM
 She turns, faces Zack again, moving, dancing... and sits across Zack's lap, her breasts against his face... her eyes directly on his... he puts his head farther back... she moves her head closer... covers his head with her long, luxuriouant red hair... as he arches, moves his head back and forth... it is still hidden in her hair... and he stops moving suddenly as the SONG ENDS.

A long beat. She kisses his neck gently and flings her hair back off of his face.

Zack looks at her a very long beat -- their eyes are on each other.

As the curtain opens we see the inside - then N/C/2 clearly blocking - cut to other side

OR: Camera goes inside, BEFORE they enter frame

At the end of the turn-around we are closer to the pole

end turn-around

Window

looks around

2 sizes Cristal & frontal
 2 sizes Zack
 1 size Zack over th. Nomi

Sometimes, you prepare all your shots in advance and then discover that you can't shoot what you had imagined because the situation is against you. The corner you wanted is not on the left, it's on the right. You want to move the camera this way, but find out it has to go that way. If you start your storyboards three or four months before your shooting, there are plenty of things that will have to change on the set. But that was rarely the case with this movie. Each night, I would just eat something and sketch the scenes for the next day and enjoy myself.

until probably not visible here
 (still 3.7)
 looks at Z. then suddenly goes down

come slowly moves f.w.
 camera lower to ground
 (8)
 back f.w.?

OR: more out of frame
 more into frame
 (9)

C. interfere?
 (10)

First: she pushes her head on his knees then moves her hand into position
 (11)

towards his legs - she opens them

puts head on his knees, then she opens his legs
 head knee knee
 (12-13)

look at him, then moves her head into his lap - a couple of times up and down!
 (13)

he looks back - and reacts as she moves her head into his lap -
 C. to be 9
 she moves up
 (14)

Cristal moves forward - fascinated - takes color? her head into his lap - then she climbs into back
 Cristal in f.g. in frame? doing coke?
 (15)

Thank you. CRISTAL (behind them)

And Nomi gets up and turns to her. Her face is expressionless as she looks at Cristal, but there is a triumph in her eyes. She's still completely naked. (49)

Cristal opens her bag, counts out five one hundred dollar bills and holds her hand out with the money. A beat as they look at each other, and Nomi takes the money, reaches for her nightie, and walks out the bamboo curtain.

Cristal and Zack look at each other a beat.

CRISTAL (smiles) It was fun, wasn't it?

ZACK (straight) You're such a bitch.

CRISTAL (smiles) But you love me. Can you walk?

He looks at her. And starts to get up, slowly.

37 INT. THE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

All the girls are getting dressed. Al comes in, puts his hand out. Nomi peels two hundred dollars off, hands it to him. Her face is expressionless.

AL (grins, to Nomi) Hey, you oughta go out and celebrate.

She doesn't even look at him.

DEE OR We can go over to my place and smoke some dope.

CARMi You still got that Thai stuff?

NADIA (Russian accent) Russia, end of day, salami and vodka. Here, marijuana, God bless America. Nomi moves towards makeup area

DEE Nomi. You wanna come?

NOMI Not me. Bye - Penny: - can I still come Ms

She looks very disturbed. She starts to head out.

We can change apris here

Lapdance

(49)

moving upwards from lap - head

more in towards Nomi

Whispers in his ear - I wanna fuck you -

37

- 98 -

head turn to C.

Coming up again

(15)

up and is nearly same move

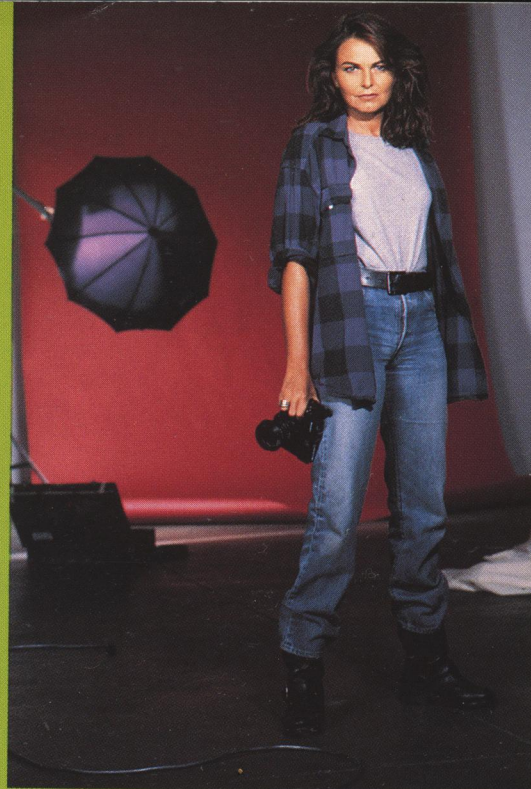
Look at Cr.

(16)

Cr.

14

OR?



THE PHOTOGRAPHERS

Douglas Kirkland

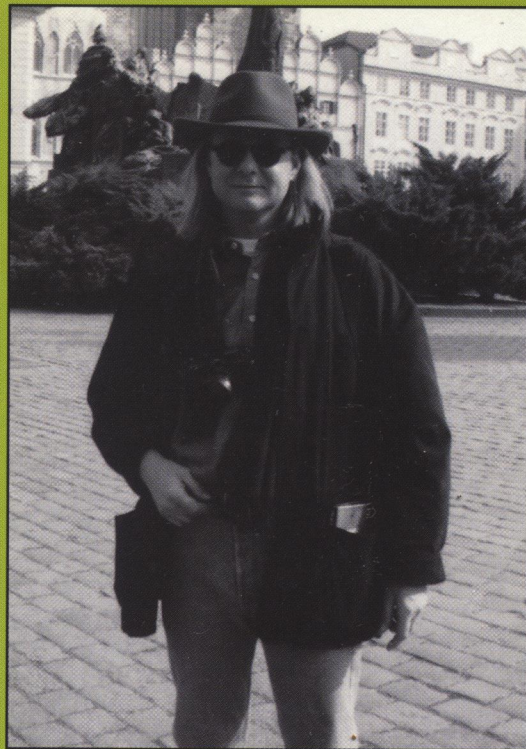
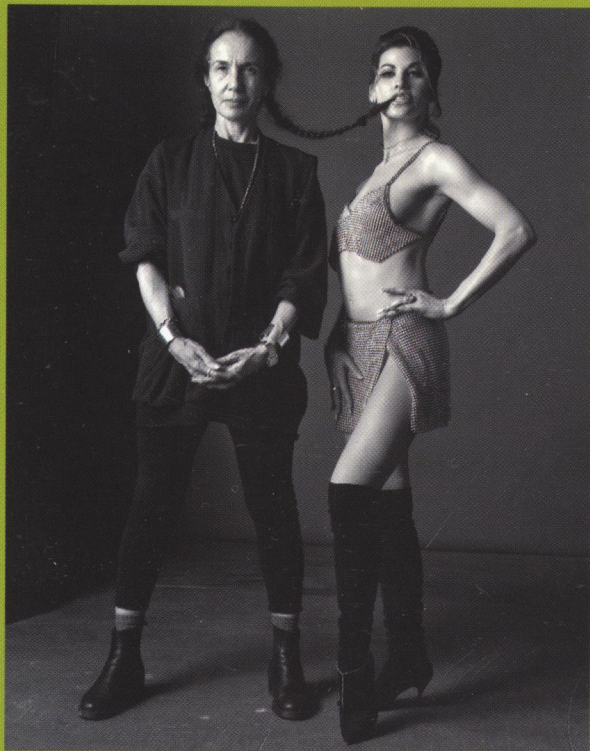
Canadian photographer Douglas Kirkland apprenticed in New York under the legendary Irving Penn, and established himself with a series of gripping *Look* and *Life* photo essays on such diverse subjects as Greece, Lebanon, Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland, Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe. Since that time he has gone on to photograph the contemporary stars Robert deNiro, Dustin Hoffman, and Sean Connery, among others.

Kirkland's work has been widely exhibited in Asia, Europe, and the United States, and he continues to be one of the most active commercial photographers in his field. He has lectured at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the American Film Institute in Hawaii, the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, the Apple Computer Center in New York, and the Kodak Centers in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan. Two compilations of Kirkland's works have been published, *Icons* (1989) and *Light Years* (1993). Among the striking portraits featured in *Icons* are those of Kim Basinger and Dr. Stephen Hawking. A third collection of his photographic work, *Body Language*, is forthcoming.

Bettina Rheims

Bettina Rheims has successfully straddled the commercial and artistic fields of photography in a career that has spanned more than two decades. In Paris, her debut exhibitions at the Centre Georges Pompidou brought her acclaim; she came to public notice with a portrait series of nude acrobats and dancers in the magazine *Egoïste*. In the ensuing years, she has become renowned for the highly stylized eroticism of her work.

Rheims has worked steadily for newspapers, magazines, and advertising agencies, and has shot fashion photos for the house of Castlebajac. France's Espace Photographique presented a retrospective of her work in 1987. Several collections of her photographs have been published, including *Female Trouble* (1989) and *Modern Lovers* (1990), a series of androgynous adolescent portraits. In 1991/92, Rheims, together with Serge Bramly, co-authored a work of fiction entitled *Chambre Close*, which featured her portraits of women in hotel rooms, accompanied by his confessional text. Her work in cinema began with film posters for François Truffaut, among other directors; she made the riveting photograph used in the poster for Verhoeven's *Basic Instinct*. In 1994, Rheims was honored as the Lauréate du Grand Prix de la Photographie de la Ville de Paris.



T H E P H O T O G R A P H E R S

Mary Ellen Mark

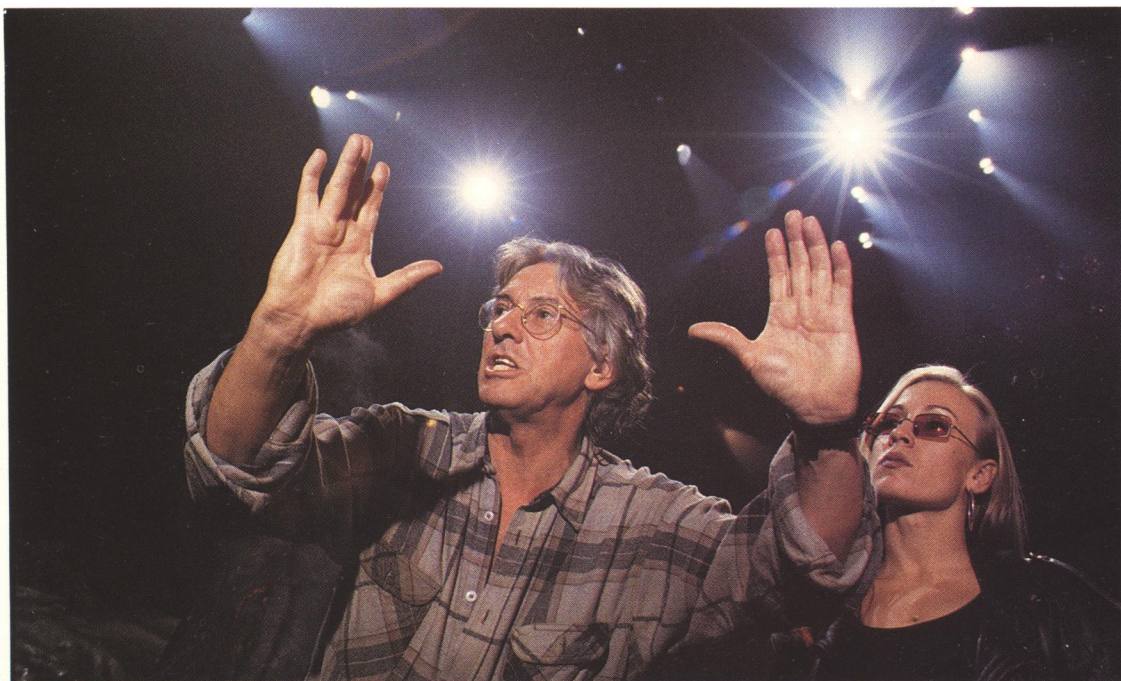
The photos of Mary Ellen Mark have touched all of us with their mix of stark, gritty realism and their appeal to the universal human spirit. The hallmark of her style is the ability to capture the sense of what it's like to be caught up in another culture—whether that of Mother Teresa's India, or the shadow world of runaway street kids in Seattle. One of our most prominent photographers, Mark has had photo essays published in magazines such as *Life*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vogue*, *GQ*, and *Fortune*. Nine collections of her photographs have been published; the most recent are *Mary Ellen Mark: Twenty-five Years* and *Indian Circus*. Mark is also the producer of the Academy Award-nominated documentary film, *Streetwise* and associate producer of *American Heart* (1992), a motion picture directed by her husband, Martin Bell.

Mark is the recipient of many coveted awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Matrix Award for outstanding women in the field of photography, the Dr. Erich Salomon Award, the Photographer of the Year Award from the Friends of Photography, the World Press Award for Outstanding Body of Work, the Victor Hasselblad Cover Award, two Robert F. Kennedy Awards, three fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Creative Arts Award Citation for Photography from Brandeis University.

Murray Close

After abandoning a career as a classical musician, Murray Close became an assistant to master director Stanley Kubrick during the making of *The Shining*. Taken under Kubrick's wing, he learned the basics of photography, and then headed out on his own to photograph emerging punk bands in London in the mid-1970s. His work has been exhibited with that of Lord Snowdon at the Olympus Gallery in London, and at the Photographer's Gallery.

Today Murray Close is one of the most in-demand unit photographers in Hollywood, and has been capturing impressions on the sets of some of Hollywood's major motion pictures of the past 15 years, including *Mission: Impossible*, *Jurassic Park*, *Hook*, *Batman*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, and *Gorillas in the Mist*. His work on *Jurassic Park* marked his fourth collaboration on a Steven Spielberg project. He has also worked with Clint Eastwood on the sets of *White Hunter Black Heart*, *A Perfect World*, and *The Rookie*. Not surprisingly, Close was tapped to be one of the seventy-five international photographers who took part in the shooting of the book *A Day in the Life of Hollywood*, for Collins Publishers, San Francisco, and is currently at work on a book of his own behind-the-scenes images of the film industry.

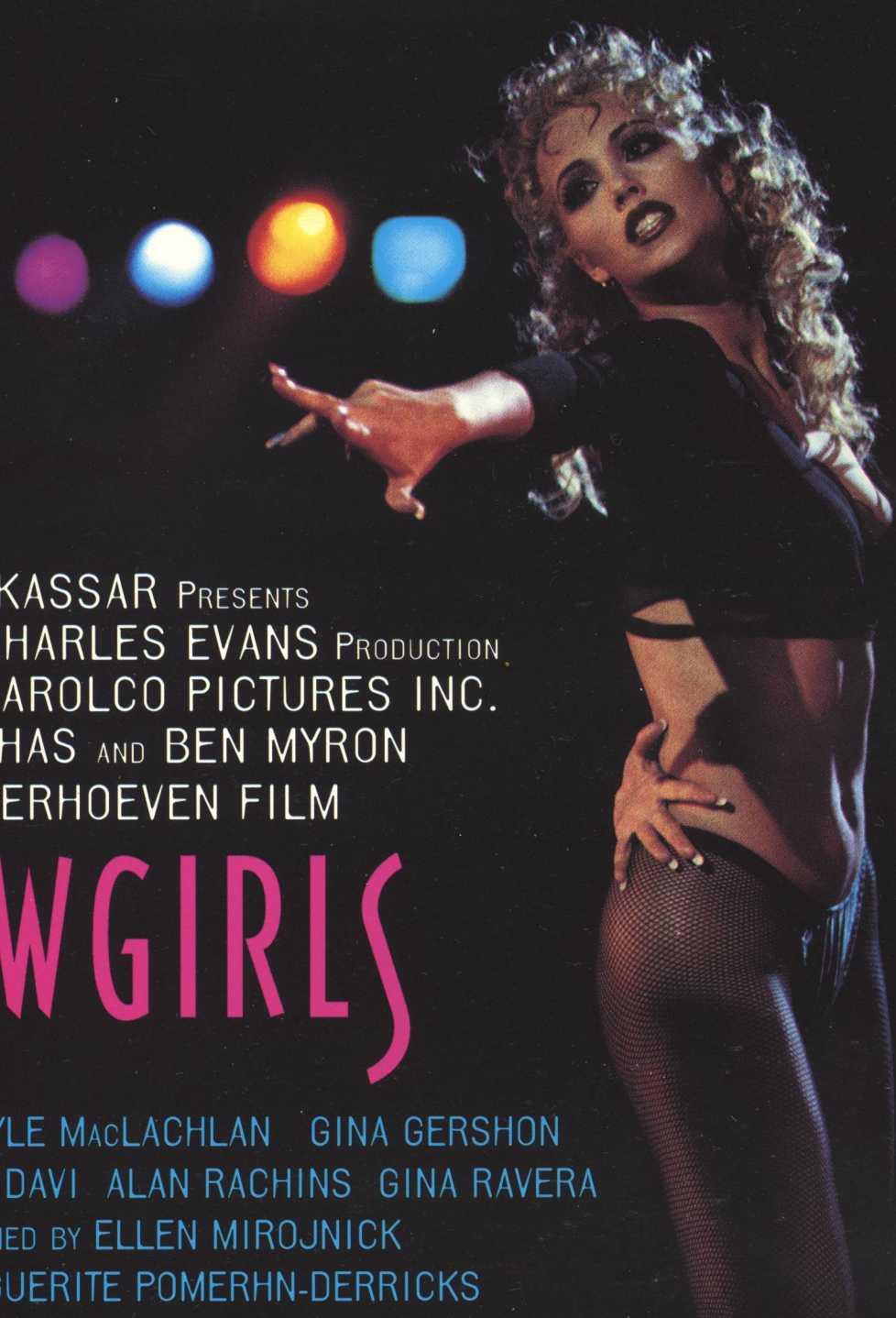


Paul Verhoeven with Marguerite Pomerhn-Derricks, the choreographer

T H E D I R E C T O R

Born just before World War II, director Paul Verhoeven graduated from the University of Leiden in his native Netherlands with a doctorate in math and physics. He began his film career as an officer in the Dutch Navy, where he made documentaries. Upon leaving the service, he continued documentary work for Dutch television. In 1969, he directed a popular TV series called *Floris*, about a medieval knight, played by Rutger Hauer. Their work together on that show began a relationship which carried through many of Verhoeven's films.

Business Is Business (1971), his film debut, was followed by the Oscar-nominated *Turkish Delight* (1973), an erotic film about an unhappily married sculptor (Hauer), which was a box office success not only in the Netherlands but in the United States as well. He followed that with *Keetje Tippel* in 1975. His next film, *Soldier of Orange* (again starring Hauer), which dealt with a group of college students in the Dutch underground in World War II, was another international hit in 1979. *Spetters* (1980) examined the lives of gay and straight teens in the world of motorcycle racing. *The Fourth Man* (1982) was the story of a bisexual novelist who investigates a blond woman, who is perhaps the murderer of her previous lovers. These impressive accomplishments finally yielded an invitation to work in the United States. After the U.S./Dutch production *Flesh + Blood* (1985), two blockbusters, *Robocop* (1987) and *Total Recall* (1990), cemented his place as one of Hollywood's most bankable directors. *Basic Instinct* (1992), starring Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, marked his first association with screenwriter Joe Eszterhas, with whom he has been reunited for the making of *Showgirls*.



MARIO KASSAR PRESENTS
A CHARGEURS/CHARLES EVANS PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAROLCO PICTURES INC.
JOE ESZTERHAS AND BEN MYRON
A PAUL VERHOEVEN FILM

SHOWGIRLS

ELIZABETH BERKLEY KYLE MACLACHLAN GINA GERSHON
GLENN PLUMMER ROBERT DAVI ALAN RACHINS GINA RAVERA

COSTUMES DESIGNED BY ELLEN MIROJNICK

CHOREOGRAPHER MARGUERITE POMERHN-DERRICKS

CO-PRODUCER BEN MYRON MUSIC BY DAVID A. STEWART

EDITED BY MARK GOLDBLATT, A.C.E. AND MARK HELFRICH, A.C.E.

PRODUCTION DESIGNER ALLAN CAMERON

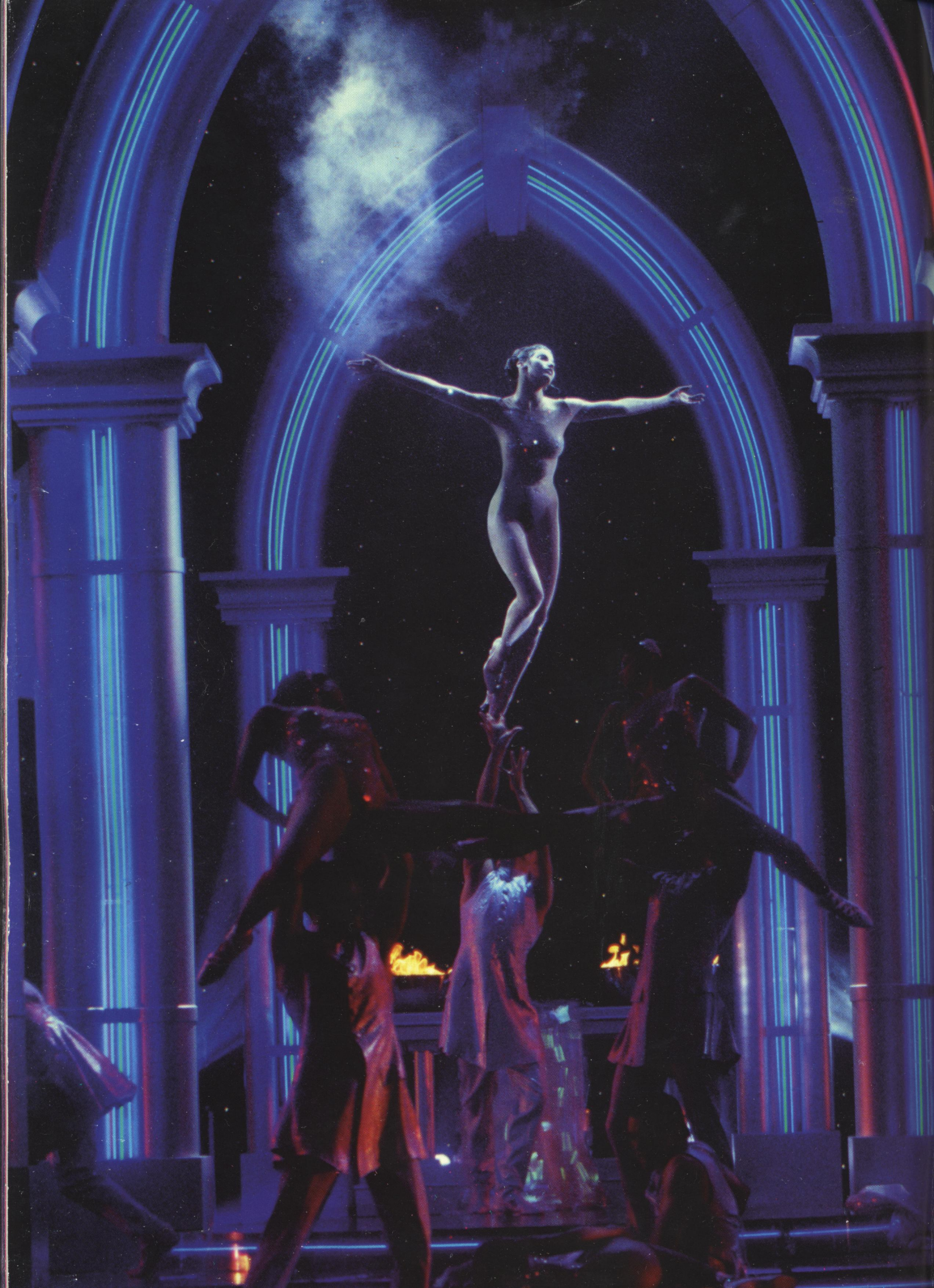
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JOST VACANO, A.S.C.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MARIO KASSAR

WRITTEN BY JOE ESZTERHAS

PRODUCED BY ALAN MARSHALL AND CHARLES EVANS

DIRECTED BY PAUL VERHOEVEN





DOUGLAS KIRKLAND

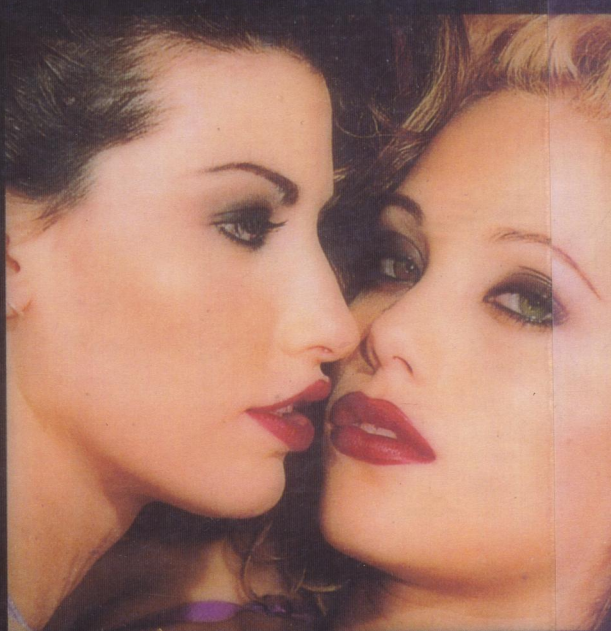
Life on the Edge

Four internationally recognized photographers have focused their lenses on the glittery world of Las Vegas sex, glamour and spectacle at the invitation of director Paul Verhoeven (*Basic Instinct*, *RoboCop*, *Total Recall*) during his production of the controversial movie *Showgirls*. Like the film itself, the more than seventy powerful images by Douglas Kirkland, Bettina Rheims, Mary Ellen Mark, and Murray Close—more than fifty in vibrant full-color, the others in rich, quadratone black-and-white—reveal the world of erotic dance, as it actually is in the clubs and casinos: pulsating, raw, unvarnished—heartpounding and heart-breaking at the same time.

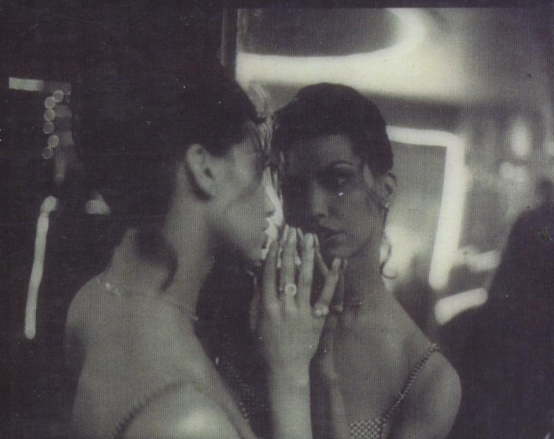
In addition, the daring filmmaker contributes a lengthy, candid essay that illuminates the visual style of these talented photographers while giving fascinating insights into his moviemaking choices and technique.

Front Cover: Movie poster photograph of Elizabeth Berkley by Alberto Tolot, inspired by the photograph "Sense" by Tono Sano.

All-cover photographs copyright © 1995 by United Artists Pictures, Inc. All rights reserved.



BETTINA RHEIMS



MARY ELLEN MARK



MURRAY CLOSE

ISBN 1-55704-267-5



90000>



NEWMARKET PRESS
A NEWMARKET PICTORIAL MOVIEBOOK